MALMÖ UNIVERSITY

Political Science

GLOBAL POLITICS AND SOCIETAL CHANGES

Master Thesis

Discursive Shift on Migration Policy in Swedish Politics and Press Media:
A Critical Look at Securitization of Migration in Sweden

Master Thesis
M. GÖZDE ORHAN GÜL
Abstract:

The refugee crisis was a turning point in Swedish exceptionalism, a discursive shift has somehow occurred within the Swedish policy debate and mainstream media whereby the '(im)migrant' is constructed as a potential security threat. To achieve the goal of the 'security' concerns of this thesis, a theoretical framework of the social constructivist perspective is to assess how securitization is discursively constructed within discursive power relations among different societal actors and to understand identifying conditions that potentially have enabled this shift. Herein, this research synthesizes media content and political opinion to analyze the shaping and changing of the discourse on securitizing migration between 2014 and 2017 by blending qualitative content analysis with critical discourse analysis. One of the conclusions reached is the analysis highlights discourses once propagated and shifted gradually in the political sphere and in a sense a certain group of immigrants is constructed as an existential threat within it.

Keywords: Refugee crises, migration, a welfare state, discourse analysis, securitization, (CDA), discursive shifts, social constructivism
List of Abbreviations:

CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis
EU: European Union
DA: Discourse Analysis
DN: Dagens Nyheter
OECD: The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SAP: Swedish Social Democrat Party
SOM Institute: Society Opinion and Media
SD: Sweden Democrats
SvD: Svenska Dagbladet
ID: Identification
IMER: International Migration and Ethnic Studies
MPs: Members of Parliament
UNHCR: United Nations Human Children Right
Table of Contents:

1. Introduction....................................................... 5

1.1. Research Problem............................................. 7

1.2. Research Aim ............................................... 9

1.3. Research Question.......................................... 10

1.4. Relevance with Global Politics......................... 10

1.5. Delimitation.................................................. 12

1.6. Outline of Thesis Structure.............................. 12

2. Background.................................................... 13

3. Previous Research........................................... 15

3.1 An overview of securing immigration in a European Context:

What is security? ................. 16

3.2. Discursive representation of migration and refugee crises in the Swedish context: 20

4. Methodology.................................................... 22

4.1. Study Design................................................ 22

4.2. Critical Discourse Analysis............................. 23

4.3. Data Material .............................................24

4.4 Ethical Considerations......................................27

5. Theoretical Framework Social Constructivist Theory......28

6. Analysis..........................................................31

6.1. Representation of Security in Sweden’s Migration Policy 32

6.2 Media coverage “’refugee crisis” in Sweden..............43

7. Results and Conclusion.......................................52

8. Bibliography....................................................57
1. Introduction

Millions of people were evacuated during and after conflicts, while others fled temporarily, and population swaps occurred between nations for safety and economic reasons. These people took refuge in safe countries where peace prevailed. “Countries in the fourth stage of modernization, with a stagnant population, will become immigration countries” (Appleyard 1991:18). Sweden is categorized as a fully modernized and industrialized state and also is one of the countries located in the group of no devastated conflict lands. Sweden became one of the favored destinations for immigrants from Asia and Latin America, particularly from Iran and Iraq as a result of its strong economy and industry in the late 1980s. Unlike other European nations immigration and social diversity were not considered significant political concerns in the Swedish context for a long period of time, as evidenced by the fact that the first prominent right-wing party gained seats in the Swedish parliament only in 2010. Throughout the 1970s and 1990s, immigration was considered an issue of less importance by the majority of political parties (Dahlström, Esaiasson, 2013). The integration of migrants was primarily a "welfare state concern" (Green-Pedersen, Odmalm, 2008). The issue of politicization of immigration is a relatively new phenomenon (Krzyanowski, 2018), which might, of course, have a role in molding public discourse on immigration.

During the 1990s, the civil conflict in the former Yugoslavia generated massive refugee flows to Sweden. A watershed moment in this process happened in 1994, during the Balkan conflicts that resulted in an inflow of migrants to Sweden (Green-Pedersen, Odmalm, 2008). The official attitude toward cross-border and irregular migration and its effect has, however, changed quite dramatically during this period. Returning to the present, migration is increasingly portrayed as an existential threat to the security of the destination country. According to Elisabeth Abiri, the policy areas concerning immigration to Sweden were securitized throughout the 1990s, and as a result, national security was prioritized over human security and human rights. Although, Abiri (2000) claimed that securing immigration dates back to the 1990s or earlier, any conclusive extraordinary regulations were not implemented until December 2001.

When the Syrian civil war broke out, in 2011, eleven million people were displaced globally at the end of the situation (National Post, 2015a). In a short time, these vulnerable people sought refuge in safe areas for themselves. Thousands of people were driven to cross the Mediterranean by war
and poverty. Whatever the reason behind this, politicians express a growing uneasiness toward this movement, and it has been accompanied by an emphasis on the linkages between migration and security. Unlike many other member states, Sweden advocated a generous immigration policy in 2015, the first year of the refugee crisis (Ostrand, 2018), and due to the open border policy, the Swedish Migration Board had to manage 162,877 asylum seekers "Applications almost doubled compared to the previous year" (Migrationsverket, 2016). However, this situation did not last long as the open border policy proved unmanageable and the Swedish government, following other European countries, turned to a more restrictive immigration policy, closing its borders, which was implemented by the Swedish government in late 2015. The possibility of obtaining a residence permit in Sweden has been restricted (SFS 2016:752) and identity checks have been introduced (SFS 2015:1073). The aim was to limit the flow of refugees into the country and prevent the country from becoming the port of choice for refugees.

The major reason in favor of this reversal was that the pressure on the country's welfare system had become excessive since the EU had shown reluctance, and inability, to forge a common accord among their member states to welcome the vast number of migrants crossing the Mediterranean. Jimmy Åkesson, the leader of the Swedish Democrats, claimed that “We are held in a situation that is fully unmanageable. We are standing towards welfare collapse, system collapse. It is required that the government react” (Wågenber, 2015). Although this was the primary reason for the U-turn, the minority government was also under political pressure from perceived fear of ISIS- and Nazi-inspired terrorism as a result of terrorist attacks occurring in other European states.

During the period 2015–2017, for the first time, the most important "problem in society" ranked as immigration in the Swedish population, even the other issues which were at the top level of interest before, fell behind this issue for example “the economy” or “labor market” (Martinsson & Andersson, 2019: 41). The shift in government priorities and the broader sociopolitical stance on immigration in Sweden in the past decade can, in part, be attributed to increasing concern about immigration, which notably came to the forefront beginning in 2011. Apart from that, the aforementioned maneuvering represents a larger sociopolitical shift in attitudes across Europe and beyond, as the subject of immigration and immigrants has climbed to the top of the political agenda. This occurred in several countries because of the methods and achievements of populist and nationalist far-right groups and activists (Wodak & Krzyzanowski, 2017). Various "discursive
shifts" (Kryżanowski, 2018a) emanating from right-wing populist policies and broader extreme conservatism (and, especially, on online forums) effectively brought the many forms of discursive rudeness into the center of political and public action (Rossini, 2019).

Due to the increased number of asylum seekers and contentious political rhetoric, the Swedish government acted with new and more stringent legislation. In the following year, there was a significant reduction in the number of immigrants and asylum seekers applying for residence permits, including those who wished to relocate their family members to Sweden (Migrationsverket, 2016). Under the new legislation, a refugee can only obtain a three-year residence permit, and a subsidiary protection person for 13 months, and other persons will not be granted any. A permanent residency permit is only guaranteed if a person can prove his employment (Ibid). These new regulations apply to unaccompanied kids as well, but only in particular circumstances (Ibid). Furthermore, family reunification has been limited to individuals who have been given three-year residence permits and are refugees, as well as those who can financially support their families while in Sweden (Ibid). Any immigrant who doesn’t request a family reunion within three months of arrival must demonstrate financial capability (Bilefskey, 2016). As a result, the new laws and regulations will limit the number of family members who intend to move to Sweden.

Global migration is frequently framed as a problem to be solved and as a recent phenomenon in the prevailing political discourse. But "migration has always existed in Sweden, as we have seen" (Solano, 2020: p.10, Frohnert, Byström, 2017), what has changed is how human movement is portrayed, controlled, and governed today. This divergence evolved historically as a result of the ethnic and racial diversity in migration, but more crucially, as a result of greater migration from the global South to the North. The rise and growing success of the far-right Swedish Democrats party in Sweden reflects this broader political evolution. This rising (negative) politicization won’t be restricted to the right-wing populist environment, also encompasses a larger range of political perspectives (Kryżyżanowski, 2018b), regardless of which side the parties and their supporters come from (Demker, 2019).

1.1. Research Problem

Global migration is a worldwide concern that is gaining prominence in international politics and a problem area that needs to be solved for both immigrants and host societies. The focal point for
the European Union in crises is increasingly on irregular migration and how to prevent people from entering the Union illegally. This stress is largely concentrated on safeguarding the external borders, indicating a shift in thinking about migration from a security standpoint instead of one that is humanitarian (Kirişci, 2003). The framing of refugees as a security threat and its consequences is the root of the problem. This thesis departs from an ideological shift regarding migration policy which has taken place in Sweden since November 2015, from a comparatively generous policy to a restrictive one. This thesis demonstrates the role of problem construction and discursive representation in the processes of policy change and resilience. In this context, it explores the reason behind this change in approach and its potential impact, demonstrating the role of issue construction and discursive shifts in policy change and resilience processes. One of the most commonly used ways is media framing. This process, as explained by Entman, typically involves selecting and highlighting: ‘Framing means selecting certain aspects of reality and highlighting them by promoting a certain problem, a causative interpretation…’ (Entman, 1993: p.51-58).

According to Ylva Brune (2004) the term ‘‘immigrants’’ is often associated with ‘‘the other’’ process which is usually known as ‘‘otherness’’ (Brune, 2004:216). In this thesis, immigrants, specifically asylum seekers and refugees, are presented as either a societal issue or a cultural difference within the host societies. Indeed, recent studies indicate that the normalization of dominant public discourses that position immigrants and immigration as a ‘problem’ in Sweden is such that immigrants' own biographical narratives display evidence of their internalization and reproduction of such discourses (Cederberg, 2014). This can be shown as a problem area that will prevent social integration and harmony. So, the problem area of this thesis is described as migration discourses of asylum seekers and refugees are portrayed or represented in the forms of stereotypes, othering, prejudices, and categorizing increasing in recent years. This is believed to instigate marginalization, discrimination, and exclusion of these minority groups.

1.2 Aim

Based on the research problem, the first aim of this thesis is to examine the shift in migration policies together with the underlying motivations. Another focus is to conduct a critical discourse analysis exploring how Swedish politicians and mainstream media frame or represent refugees and asylum seekers, especially in the context of the "refugee crisis" that occurred between 2015 and
2017. To examine how the discourse on the securitization of migration in Sweden has been shifted and shaped during this time period. To delve much deeper than mere words, notions, or concepts (or merely into political and media representations of recent occurrences), I point out that in order to comprehend diversification in immigration policy, migration studies must focus on the discursive processes of sense-making and policy construction. One of the objectives is to examine how securitization is manifested in the course of refugee crises and how these refugee crises are perceived as related to the Swedish security discourse. This involves exploring the ways in which the influx of refugees and asylum seekers influences Sweden’s perception of security, including its national, social, and economic dimensions. Through an analysis of the relationships between refugee crises and securitization, this thesis provides insights into how these events led to changes in Swedish policy, public perception, and the broader security perspective. I delve into the discursive construction of security within the Swedish national political arena and explore how securitization efforts interact with policy shifts. "Discourses and social practices are two sides of the same coin. What we say influences what we do and vice versa” (Bilgic, 2006: p.34). The reason why this topic gained momentum in the research field is the increasing demand for migration toward the Global North and major attempts at securitization in Europe. The fact that security policy which is not so new in Europe reached its peak with the 2011 Syrian civil war. As a result, there is a very general agreement that migration has been the focus of initiatives at securitization in the twenty-first century. Hence, the research will center on the empirical background of the securitization of migration policy, employing Sweden as a single case study.

The study will also scrutinize the involvement of various actors in shaping the discourse on the securitization of migration policy in Sweden during the refugee crisis and the extent to which this discourse has evolved over time. The different actors who comprise the discourse on the securitization of migration will be examined separately. Thus, the goal of this research is to uncover shifting discursive practices around the securitization of migration, as well as the roles of various actors in this transition. I highlighted both the threat as perceived by the Swedish Government to justify its policy shift from "open your hearts" Brandel, T., Eriksson, G. Svenska Dagbladet, (2015-11-14) to a more restricted posture wrapped in the securitizing language in the fall of 2015. The final objective of this study is to formulate hypotheses and develop a theoretical model for future research that can elucidate the connection between framing strategies and their impact on refugees. This would be accomplished both using social constructivism as a theoretical framework and
critical discourse analysis as an analytical framework which is to help better understand the process.

1.3 Research Questions

The aim of this study is to analyze the discursive shift in Sweden’s response to refugee reception. To pursue these aims the study centered on the following questions.

1. How did rhetoric driven by key actors play a significant role in the process of securitization? Which factors associated with refugee crises impacted securitization?

2. How did the securitization of migration policy manifest itself in Sweden between 2015 and 2017? How have political opinions and media coverage of the refugee crisis gradually shifted?

To investigate these questions, I take a discourse analytical approach and focus on linguistic, contextual, and conceptual constructions of representations of refugees.

1.4 Relevance with Global Politics

The heightened influx of irregular migration in the European Union has reached an unprecedented level over the last years. To safeguard the Schengen system and prevent additional tragedies involving irregular migrant, who lose their lives in significant numbers while attempting to reach the shores of the European Union, prompt and resolute measures are imperative at both the national and European scales (European Commission, COM (2006)733, p. 3).

Migration is inherently a transnational phenomenon that can often involve vulnerable populations, including refugees and asylum seekers. Ensuring the safety and well-being of these individuals is a global humanitarian imperative. Managing migration effectively often requires international cooperation and coordination. Addressing the root causes of migration, combating human trafficking, and ensuring the fair treatment of migrants and refugees are all issues that transcend national borders. Migration can also have geopolitical implications, influencing relations between countries and regions. For example, disputes over the movement of migrants and refugees have played a role in international conflicts and negotiations. Migration policy can impact diplomatic relations with other countries, especially if there are disagreements or tensions regarding refugee acceptance, deportations, or border security. Such diplomatic tensions can have broader
implications in global politics. Such problems suggest that the refugee crisis should be examined in the context of the securitization of migration by states.

As a result, the securitization of migration has become a global issue because it involves a complex interplay of political, economic, humanitarian, and security-related factors that extend beyond the borders of individual countries. Understanding and addressing the challenges and opportunities associated with migration requires a global perspective and international cooperation. This is why both in the field of Global Politics and International Relations (IR) literature, the study of the social construction of security threats started to gain considerable attention in the mid-1990s (Svantesson 2014).

Abiri has contended that during the 1990s in official Swedish discourse, refugees and asylum seekers were perceived as potential threats to both national and international security (Abiri 2000). In recent years, there has been a discursive shift in migration policy in Swedish politics, reflecting broader global and national political dynamics, particularly securitization concerns. The shift in Swedish migration policy is influenced by global events and trends. The rise of populist and anti-immigrant sentiments in various countries, including Europe, has led to a more cautious and restrictive approach to immigration in Sweden. Sweden is part of the European Union (EU) which created the necessity of adjusting Swedish immigration asylum policy to the EU legal framework (Schierup, Ålund, 2011), and the Schengen Agreement, which allows for passport-free travel within participating countries. Swedish migration policy can affect and also be affected by these agreements in the context of border control and free movement.

Sweden, like many other countries, cooperates with international organizations like the United Nations (UN) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on migration issues. Changes in policy can affect its stance within these organizations and influence global discussions on migration. In summary, threat construction and the discursive shift in Swedish politics regarding migration policy are closely linked to global migration trends and debates, including the securitization of migration. When the Swedish policy fell away from the EU’s refugee policy perspective, this raised questions about commitment and solidarity inside the EU.

Researching Sweden in the context of the securitization of refugee crises is interesting for several reasons. First, Sweden is unique in Scandinavia and even throughout all of Europe when it comes to welcoming the most vulnerable. The state has a strong reputation for its humanitarian stance on
refugees, which makes it an interesting example for examining how a country with such values deals with the securitization of refugee issues. Also, Sweden's policies towards refugees have evolved over time, offering insights into how a country adapts its approach in response to changing security concerns and international developments. Sweden experienced a significant influx of refugees during the European refugee crisis, which challenged its existing policies and led to a reassessment of security implications related to migration. Sweden's efforts to address security concerns provide a rich field of study for examining the discourses and policies related to the interplay between humanitarianism and security. Examining Sweden, in this context, can help researchers better understand the complex interplay between refugee crises, security, and humanitarianism in a country known for its inclusive refugee policies.

1.5 Delimitation

Although public debate and perception of society are not the explicit targets of this research, the impact of the media and political culture on the perception of society is mentioned in a few paragraphs. In the field of securing the refugee crisis with discourse analysis, while media discourse dominates in the literature, the number of studies examining political discourse, and both together is preferable. Therefore, this study presents different perspectives for future research, from the possibility of co-observing the power relations associated with both actors. The time and resources available, as well as the word limit on the assignment, have of course limited the possible scope of this research. This thesis is not intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the securitization of migration policy within the EU. Instead, it focuses to a limited extent on including it in order to elucidate certain factors contributing to the policy shift in Sweden. The emphasis is on theoretically explaining the government's fluctuations in the pursued policy and what may have influenced this. Further research may benefit from a more comprehensive exploration of securitization discourses, including the motivations and implicit policies behind them.

1.6. Outline of Thesis Structure

My thesis is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter of this thesis has presented some general information about the subject area, for instance, the introduction, research questions, aim, and delimitations which I shall build on later in this research. The following section will be about background knowledge of the research field. The third chapter is a more extensive literature assessment that will assist in locating my thesis within a larger literature scope and discussing its
The next chapter covers methodological approaches and the data set that I applied for my thesis takes place. The fifth chapter shall focus on theoretical and analytical frameworks. As mentioned above the discussions of the issue of securitization within the post-structural theory perspective as well as an overview of Critical discourse analysis, analyzing the case inside a discursive context. The sixth chapter, which is an essential part of the thesis, besides revealing the comprehensive and complete purpose of the research, contains discussions of research questions and how they are all relevant to each other. It’s also analyzed and structured into themes based on the theoretical argument together with methodology. In the last chapter, I will end my thesis by presenting the general findings of my study and addressing the research question. Furthermore, this section discusses the applicability of this study to the field of IR overall and outlines suggestions for potential subsequent research to further develop the subject area within which this thesis is situated.

2. Background

In this chapter, I present general background knowledge on the contemporary character of migration policy in Europe and Sweden. As well as the Swedish immigration discourse, particularly Swedish political debates on the reception that helps to understand and better analyze the issues addressed. For this, a brief description of the crisis and its perception on a country basis and some historical and cultural frameworks are presented as the reasons behind the reconstruction of Swedish refugee policy and the shift in discourse in the field of mainstream media.

For many years, migration has been considered in terms of security challenges in the European Union, and the EU represents migration as part of the security discourse (Huymans, 2000, 2006; Leonard, 2010; Guild, 2003). In today's society, migration, especially immigration, is a highly controversial issue that has come to the fore. One of the reasons was that the war in Syria has resulted in an alarming rise in the number of refugees entering the EU, which has been increasing steadily. Media depiction of Europe attained a record high as a result of the number of refugees entering in 2015 (1.3 million applications), more than double the value from the prior year which is cited as a record number (Eurostat, 2018a), and in 2016 (more than 1.2 million asylum seekers entered the EU). Within Europe pressure and intense debate were growing on policymakers, and situations resulted in an urgent response. In recent years rapidly changing balances (identity, religion, culture) in Europe have sparked debates on how to handle the influx of refugees who are
fleeing their home country to search for safe areas. Along with it gained prominence in the news, in political debates, and in the development of global policy.

At the beginning of the crisis, Sweden welcomed an all-time high number of asylum applicants in 2015, along with Germany, which granted the most asylum in the EU. Sweden has long had an open immigration policy and an integration system based on equal rights (Emilsson, 2014). In contrast to its neighbors and the majority of EU nations, Sweden had resisted the tendency towards more restrictive immigration laws and the implementation of civic integration policies (Goodman 2010, 2012). Although Sweden is a relatively small size country (in terms of population), it is also known globally as a country that acts on the principles of international engagement. In the post-war period, thousands of migrants from countries torn apart by political turmoil around the world were welcomed and received significant humanitarian aid (Östberg & Andersson, 2013). From the late 1960s onward, in particular, Sweden provided asylum to those fleeing political unrest and other situations (ibid). This trend persisted well into the 1980s, notably in the early 1990s (due to Balkan refugees), and most recently, after 2014. Since the early 2000s, no other OECD state has awarded more people international protection per capita (UNHCR 2017). When Syria and other conflict areas were mixed and forced people to look for a safe shelter in Europe, these policy choices contributed to making Sweden one of the best preferences for many asylum-seekers. The OECD (2016) round out that in 2014-2015 Sweden experienced the highest per capita influx of asylum seekers (migrationsinfo, 2016) among OECD countries and even among other countries in the Global North (UNCHR 2017).

However, the Swedish government changed from having the most generous asylum policy in Europe per capita to positioning itself at the European minimum level in terms of refugee admittance numbers in a couple of months. Researchers in Sweden have highlighted the existence of a shift in the discourse on immigration, from earlier rhetoric emphasizing participation and open-door policies to an acceptance of the crisis and the limitations in tackling it. This change subsequently led to policy and legislative changes framed in the context of security (Dahlgren, 2016). While retaining the rhetoric of a humanitarian superpower, Sweden has since the autumn of 2015 announced the planned expulsion of up to 80,000 asylum seekers not receiving residence permits and instituted mandatory ID checks at the border. Nationalist forces have become stronger, and the EU idea appears to be reaching the breaking point. In times of crisis, such as the present
refugee crisis, identity, and identity construction become more prominent in political discussions, as well as in the discursive construction of social reality through language. Eugen Weber emphasized that when a democratic society faces a crisis, the other and dread of the “other” take center stage (Bauman, 2004:117).

However, the relationship between the welfare state and identities defined as “others” must also be studied in order to determine the background for the evolution of the immigration issue over the previous decade. As a result of the 1990s economic crisis, the Swedish welfare model was changed to emphasize personal responsibility and neoliberal labor market policies, moving away from the ideas of universal redistribution and social solidarity (Ekman, 2015). In the case of refugee reception, welfare state support is inversely connected to opinions about the country's level of ethnic diversity.

As will be seen in the literature section, many current studies have raised concerns about the media’s portrayal of the 2015 refugee crisis as a problem and as posing a risk to society. Nevertheless, it appears that this threat-based narrative of immigration has existed since at least the 1980s (Ålund and Schierup, 1991), other scholars also point out that portraying the immigration debate as an economic danger to the Swedish labor market may date back to the 1960s and 1970s (Schall, 2016). Therefore, despite the widespread perception of Sweden as an example of an equitable and cosmopolitan society, it appears that the immigration issue has always been a long way from problem-free, even before the refugee crisis (Schierup and Ålund, 2011). One the media and the scholars have come to believe that the events of 2015 were both a singular occurrence (unique incident) and a crisis. This crisis dramatically reversed not only media framing and policy discourse on migrants but also the aforementioned ideological underpinning of migration policy, which was considered to be an extraordinary event in the history of migration in Sweden. Consequently, it’s possible to connect the events in the general atmosphere surrounding the migration agenda to the events of the refugee crisis.

3. Previous Research

This section will present previous research within the field of securitization of migration policy on a national and regional level both in the political sphere and mainstream media moreover highlight how these policy implementations represent the refugee crisis in a rhetorical framework on a
Swedish and European basis. They were chosen because of their contributions and effects in terms of providing integrity to the research field of this thesis.

3.1 An overview of securitizing immigration in a European Context

The rationale for combining the Swedish case with the EU is that Swedish actions are put in relation to other countries in the EU. Similarly, the actions of the other member states influence Swedish politics to a large extent.

**What is security?**

One of the key issues surrounding the debate over securitization is first defining and answering the question of what security is.

Buzan, Weaver, and Wilde, (1998) explore this subject in the context of international relations, arguing that security may be defined as the survival of the nation-state whether there is an existential threat to the object of reference. In terms of securitization, Weaver, (1998) contends that designating an issue as a security concern is a political decision and that once something is declared a security issue, it gets securitized whether this is based on a genuine or perceived threat. Thus, security in this context is socially constructed and self-referential, (Buzan, Weaver, and De Wilde, 1989).

For many years, immigration has been increasingly linked with terrorism, drug trafficking, and organized crime smuggling, especially in the United States and the European Union. Immigration is portrayed as a danger to national security, financial stability, and national identity by political elites, the media, and governments (Jaskulowski, 2019: p.711). They have been split migrants into two categories – desirable and undesirable – determined by their education, skills, place of origin, and cultural background (Mavroudi and Nagel, 2016). The visibility of the migration-security nexus in the international security debate increased after the terrorist attacks in New York in 2001, even if migration has been on the security agenda since the 1990s. Following the terrorist attacks in France and Brussels in 2016, interest in the connection between globalization, migration, and security increased further (Adamson, 2013: p.165; Bigo, 2002: p.63), especially inside the European Union borders.
A large part of the literature has investigated public opinion regarding immigration and immigrants, but research has focused less on opinions regarding refugees and asylum seekers (Bansak et al. 2016; Citrin et al. 1997; Dancygier and Laitin 2014; Finseraas & Listhaug 2013; Malhotra et al. 2013; Sides & Citrin 2007; Weldon 2006). However, recently, various studies have been conducted examining exclusionary attitudes towards the 2015 refugee crisis, especially in Europe (Dinas et al. 2016; Hangartner et al. 2019; Steinmayr 2016; Czymara & Schmidt-Catran 2017; Esaiasson et al. 2016). The collection of literature on the subject area has expanded significantly and a great deal of work has been conducted on the securitization debate. Difficulties in accessing refugee protection due to tougher asylum conditions and the use of outsourcing and border control to deter migrants from entering the EU, (Innes, 2015; Jaskulowski, 2017; Lazardis and Khursheed, 2015; Triandafyllidou, 2015) pushes humanitarian boundaries and it creates the need for further investigation. Hence, the perceived securitization of migration has received a lot of attention in academia, especially in the European context, and there is a vast amount of literature on the subject. For example, Tsoukala (2005) investigated how the migrant threat is socially manufactured and how migrants have been transformed into "social enemies" in Europe based on security concerns. Early studies have found that asylum seekers often are portrayed as threats (Benson 2013; Horsti 2008; Hovden et al. 2018). Therefore, it’s not surprising that various scholars have scrutinized the reasons used for the securitization of migration.

Myron Weiner (1992: p. 105) describes how refugees might endanger both the receiving and their home countries, as well as how migratory movements can affect international steadiness and order. Likewise, he contends that refugees can be portrayed as opponents of the home regime (refugees as conflict creators), migration anticipated political risk (terrorism, drug trafficking), a cultural identity threat (traditions and citizenship), as a social and economic burden (costs of hosting refugees and their problematic social behavior), and as a hostage in the recipient nation (used as leverage in disputes). Ceyhan and Tsoukala, (2002: p.24) have generated an identical set of discursive arguments: socioeconomic (associated with unemployment), security (refugees threaten sovereignty), identity (demography and national identity threat), and political (politicians' use of xenophobic language to achieve a desired purpose). These categories have been frequently expressed by a number of different researchers as well (Fauser, 2006: p.3; & Karyotis, 2007).
A general point of view in the literature is that immigration has become an increasingly salient political issue in many European countries over recent decades. In part, this has been due to the increasing numbers of migrants arriving in Europe. However, Europe's established security framework is far from matching this reality (Bilgic, 2006), and it has been compounded by a lack of unified policies among EU member states. Although it is not clear what kinds of cooperative policy agendas are favored, recent research has identified that there is a widespread public belief that the EU member states should cooperate closer to managing migration flows.

In the literature on policy change and resilience, external shocks and pressures are always associated with drastic changes in nation-states. Opening windows of opportunity for change in stable and path-dependent policy models or else (Pierson, 1996), pressure from the outside drives change in identical manners across countries, frequently taking the form of a "race to the bottom" (Pierson, 1996). With thousands of migrants on the move, nations engaged to avoid becoming a favorite destination for them by offering less favorable entrance and welfare circumstances. Hernes (2018) showed that following the so-called "refugee crisis," states adjusted their policies in a restrictive manner. This involves stricter regulatory guidelines as well as limitations on the social rights of refugees (Pinson & Arnot, 2010). Western Europe has emphasized the need for restrictions on population flows as regulations on migration (Kostakopoulou, 2000, Ugur, 1995; Miles and Thränhardt, 1995; Alaux, 1991; Soulier, 1989). However, the Dublin Convention restricts nations' capacity to pass the buck in the case of an asylum claim so the country is responsible for the asylum application (Dublin Regulation, 2020).

A common view in scholarly literature is that developed countries support international migration provided it satisfies the demands of their labor markets and when it proceeds "in a controlled and predictable manner." But when it involves the irregular and ‘spontaneous’ arrival of people from other parts of the world, and when those migrants appear to bring little financial or social capital with them, the countries react with alarm (Borjas G. J. and Crisp J. 2005).

According to a European Commission report from 2006, “in Europe, the general public's attitude towards immigration is evolving towards one that is more adverse” (Beutin, 2006: p.2), pervasive insecurity connected with immigration has been emphasized in European public polls (cf. European Commission, 2010). This is somewhat unsurprising considering that populist anti-immigrant parties and unfavorable media coverage have substantially affected public discussion.
on migration in many European countries in recent years. Gabriella Lazaridis and Vasiliki Tsagkroni (2015) investigate 'the rhetoric of extremes' and how far-right parties in Scandinavian countries securitize migrants by using rhetoric to link migration with societal issues such as crime and unemployment in order to strengthen homogeneous national identity. The study demonstrates how electoral support for far-right parties in Scandinavian nations has surged in recent years, and this situation renders migration policies an increasingly major topic in the national political scene. Huysman (2000) addresses that society has become more aware of the link between migration and security issues. Not just right-wing populist parties, but also the media and internal and foreign security agencies like the Secret Service, have discussed migration as an existential threat to internal security and national identity. The general opinion is that political viewpoints and news both reflect and impact public opinion toward immigration. Researchers argue that media salience alters audience perceptions of (McCombs, 2005) and knowledge of the subjects of coverage (de Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2006; Eveland & Scheufele, 2000). However, research also demonstrates that the ‘real world’ politics and policy context conditions how news accounts are received and read (Boomgaarden, 2007; Boomgaarden & Vliegenthart, 2009). Awareness about immigration-related news coverage and the implications on people's views and attitudes may thus be necessary to comprehend upcoming immigration policy developments as well as the growing prominence of anti-immigrant parties within the European Union (Burscher, van Spanje, & de Vreese, 2015). The impact of the media on public ideas, perceptions, and attitudes is difficult to separate from other related variables. However, it is clear from the literature that, the more an issue is prominently featured in the media, such as asylum or immigration, the more significant the impact of media coverage is likely to be (Koopmans, 1996).

The securitization that has happened over the last twenty years has generated waves of hostility to the further expansion of the human rights system, and the securitization goes on to violate human rights within and between states. Moreover, in this period, a significant percentage of various communities throughout the world expressed worry about the failure of globalization's promises which resulted in a public reaction across the majority of the northern region (Brysk, 2019: p.220). This claim fits well with the Swedish case, where migration policy long has been appertaining to tension between generosity and openness on one side, and restrictions and power on the other side; albeit mostly within a rhetorical language, it is expressed that migrants should be welcomed in
Sweden and right to take part in the welfare system and coexist peacefully with their families (Byström & Frohnert, 2017; Spång, 2015).

### 3.2 Discursive representation of migration and “refugee crises” in the Swedish context

The term used to describe the irregular migration that has taken place since 2015 is "refugee crisis" (UNHCR, 2015; DRC, 2015). The term "refugee crisis", although it has the potential to reproduce language and discourse that might breed bias toward refugees (UNHCR, 2022; Videler, 2017), this term is frequently used in research papers, publications, or in relation to a subject. The various ideas and sociopolitical concepts utilized in recent discourses, such as the "refugee crisis," serve to primarily legitimize the stated urgency, including numerous "special measures," that were intended to be done in recent years as opposed to before 2015. It is stigmatizing to refer to the recent migratory flows as a "crisis"—especially for the refugees themselves—and it gives this discourse an overly alarming tone. It serves a definite political goal, making it clear that it is not random but rather purposeful and deliberate. In fact, this and other crucial ideas that have become popular recently are also examples of recontextualization (Bernstein, 1990; Krzyzanowski, 2016; Wodak & Fairclough, 2010) of earlier (negativized) representation of significant developments in asylum-seeking and immigration (for example, in the context of wars like the one in the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s; (see Matouschek, Wodak, & Janusch, 1995; Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; Wodak, 2013a, 2013b; Wodak & Van Dijk, 2000).

Previous evidence from Sweden indicates that the country's major political figures – generally the Social Democrats – have chosen to transition from homogeneity to heterogeneity in the construction of the universal welfare state which may have an impact on how the populace thinks about the issue (Schall 2016). In the case of the 'refugee crises' in Sweden, the policy approach and rhetoric of the government, along with the portrayal in the media discourse, have shifted over time, as discussed in the previous section. Welfare for the natives’ clashes with embracing diversity and multiculturalism. Opinion surveys, for example, show that support for the welfare state is inversely connected with opinions of the country's racial heterogeneity (Maureen A., Eger., 2009). Following this way of reasoning, the former aspect is typically associated with fierce ethnic competition for the shortage of resources. One of the other ideas is that immigration not only threatens financial resources but also threatens our culture; accordingly, "immigrants" are perceived as not acting in the same manner as "we" (the locals) and not adhering to the same
societal standards. The purpose of this is to demonstrate how disseminated anti-immigration arguments are included in the development of national identities as a specific mythology of the people.

Hernes' (2018) assessment explained that constraints were implemented across all nations, but various political strategies were adopted based on political cultures. According to Nicole-Stokes Dupass (2017), a new political situation emerged in Sweden in 2015 that cannot be compared to any other circumstance. This is because the humanitarian perspective that had previously dominated the country's discourse on migration drastically and extensively changed, giving state-centric strategy precedence. Abiri (2000: p.2,6) argues in her investigation of the Swedish context, that the securitization of a state's official discourse affects the possibility for asylum seekers to obtain asylum and furthermore the respective society's respect for human rights.

Previous studies have shown that policymakers working in the immigration area are very aware of media coverage and adjust their practices accordingly (Thorbjørnsrud, 2015), however, reversely Benson and Saguy (2005) found that national cultural institutions and repertoires have an impact on journalistic framing. Research related to media effects on the migration narrative in Europe frequently emphasizes the framing of cultural and economic threats (Aalberg et al., 2012; Costello & Hodson, 2011; Florack, Piontkowski, Rohmann, Balzer, & Perzig, 2003; van der Linden & Jacobs, 2016). The key findings in this area reveal that there is significant national difference (for example, the Swedish press is most welcoming to immigrants, whereas the UK press is least positive and welcoming). In general point of view, Swedish print media are more positive (Hovden, Mjelde, & Gripsrud, 2018) and less problem-oriented than any other European country even from other Scandinavian countries such as Denmark. Until lately multiculturalism was the dominating official discourse in the country, including simplified rules to become a citizen, whereas in neighboring Denmark for example, an assimilation discourse was and still is hegemonic with extensive restrictions (Spâng, 2015).

In a nutshell, a country's political culture is important, and it is assumed that how particular issues are framed by the media would reflect that political culture. While the quality of the media as a whole is debatable, prior research has shown that fundamental factors that affect how news is framed include national interests and concerns, the form of elite thought and debate, as well as cultural and social practices (Ravi 2005; Floss & Marcinkowski 2008; Helbling 2014). Analysis
of discourse presented in the media offers valuable insight into the power and influence these agencies have over the public, and also the degree to which they are directed by public opinion. It was found that the media played an active role in shaping public opinion on – the refugee crisis and securitization – while also passively being influenced by public and political sentiments (Buitrago, 2013, p. 3).

4. Methodology

The methodological approach for this thesis will be presented in this chapter. Following that, the data selection and qualitative coding that has been used will also be presented.

4.1. Study Design

With the aim of the thesis in mind and to investigate the research question, I choose to apply a single case study qualitative content analysis, and critical discourse analysis (CDA) methods together. Examining the media narrative and policy perspective on an issue using critical discourse analysis provides an opportunity to evaluate the relationship between power and language and their impact on public policy (Marko, 2013, p. 203). It embraces that politicians and the media play a major role in the securitization of migration because they interpret the main narratives being told to society. While the discourse analysis, as such, made possible the critical appraisal of the interpretation and meaning behind the debate of an issue (Buitrago, 2013, p. 4), qualitative content analysis is the process of looking for underlying themes in the study's source material. The goal was to identify and examine the discourses on which the articles containing the words "migration," "asylum seeker", "refugee crises," and "securitization" were based. It was also intended to identify how refugee crises and migrants, particularly refugees and asylum seekers, were portrayed in these articles in light of the discursive shift.

Qualitative research data are driven by specific research questions derived from theoretical concerns, highlighting the importance of engaging with social reality and observing the social world in this way (Bryman, 2016). However, qualitative research is frequently challenging to duplicate, which can cause issues with generalization and transparency, claims Bryman (2016: 298,299). In order to get around this problem the primary material is supplemented with trustworthy secondary sources that explore the topic of the "refugee crisis" and securitization concern in Sweden since this would support the overall discussion in the data material and analysis.
chapter. A case study, according to Bryman (2016: 60, 61), is a thorough examination of a specific situation and its complexity. To get comprehensive and in-depth knowledge, the case study is supplemented by an organized assessment of secondary sources utilizing a qualitative research technique.

4.2. Critical Discourse Analysis

In the humanities as well as the social and political sciences, the multidisciplinary study of discourse has gained popularity since the 1960s (Fairclough, 1995). Since then, it has been utilized frequently, and it has been adjusted to the circumstances in which it's applied. This approach has also been applied to analyze the research field of racism, minorities, ethnic relations, and migration (Van Dijk, T.A., 2018). The construction, maintenance, and legitimization of social inequalities via discourses are critically described, understood, and explained using the critical discourse analysis (CDA) qualitative analytical technique. It has been particularly emphasized that discourses regulate knowledge of the world and provide our mutual comprehension of events. Regardless of whether discursive choices are conscious or unconscious, CDA rests on the notion that the way we use language is purposeful (Mullet, 2018).

Although there are different strands of policy analysis in discourse, most draw to some extent on Michel Foucault’s (1997) theories of discourse. This discourse is comprised of "practices that methodically form the objects of which they speak; they do not identify objects; they constitute them and, in the process, conceal their own invention" (Foucault, 1977, p. 49). Thus, Foucault's perspective on the concept of discourse as a guide, relevant newspaper articles, and government speeches have been examined critically with the main objectives of identifying the discourses that serve as the foundation for these articles and determining how refugee crises are portrayed in these government and media fields. Policy analysts who absorbed Foucault's ideas have begun to refer to policy as discourse (Bacchi, 2005, p. 200). Policy, in accordance with the policy-as-discourse approach, is part of a wider system of social interactions that shapes what is said and thought. Policy texts concurrently develop from specific policy discourses while also producing such discourses.

Groups and individuals are accepted, rejected, or transformed as a result of these texts and discourses, and they also place themselves in accordance with this depiction (Blackmore, 2005, p. 98). A discourse-based approach to policy "frames policy as a discourse in which both problems
and solutions are created,” rather than as a response to existing conditions and problems (Goodwin, 1996, p. 67). The main objective of utilizing policy as discourse, according to Bacchi (2000 p.48), is to highlight the manner in which social issues or policy issues manifest themselves in speech.

This thesis explores the existence and cause of the discursive shift; therefore, I intend to investigate the concept of framing the “refugee crisis” as a security concern within the context of Sweden. To accomplish this, I will examine the discourse(s) of elites and the media that highlighted the general perception about refugees, and the discourse analysis here will allow identifying ways of thinking that create and perpetuate aspects of social life. The usefulness of adopting (CDA) for this particular investigation lies in the ability of how power is achieved through dominant discourses and the way the distribution of power affects different groups in society (Denscombe, 2009, p. 393, 396).

You can identify how certain groups or individuals use language to assert authority, maintain control, or marginalize others. Security goes beyond words; it embodies a tangible action. In this context, security isn't merely a description; it represents a specific type of language usage that carries out an action, as explained by Nyman (2018, p. 102).

The current study shows how discursive practices often maintain inequality between two social groups, in our case “immigrants” and “Swedes.” By analyzing and critically examining the articles containing the words “immigrant”, “refugee crisis”, “security” and “threat” the purpose was to discover which discourses demonstrate securitization and also how the situations are portrayed in these articles. In fact, as noted by Hansen (2006), discourses not only determine identities but also eventually create them in relation to one another, resulting in the establishment of power systems in which some are empowered and others constrained, and where the power is unevenly distributed regarding the ability to speak.

4.3. Data Material

The empirical basis of the analysis mainly contains two main types of data. The key official statements of policymakers and government actors, policy documents and decisions of the Swedish Migration Agency and the Swedish National Office as well as media texts (editorials and journalistic articles) used together as primary material. On their individual websites, the majority of these publications are readily accessible. As well as a number of other sources, related books,
scholarly articles, and other reviews were used as secondary material to provide commentary, analysis, and discussion when researching an alternative perspective. They were identified with the help of keywords such as “refugee crises”, “immigrant”, “securitization”, “newcomer”, “migration”, “threat”.

These two sources were utilized together because they jointly provide a wider range of the political framework in which the refugee issue was addressed. Many sources were found on the internet and some related books were found in the university library. I have gathered policy papers relating to the political agreement with unique measures to address the refugee issue in the autumn of 2015. Additionally, I surveyed texts on how these measures were followed up the following year by actual parliamentary acts that caused discursive changes. The choice of data sources was based on their accessibility, diversity, and relevance to the subject area. This comprises articles that provide criticism and analysis as well as real policy papers and discussions about the refugee crisis and securitization in the national parliament. Regarding Sweden, as policy documents whether they are government officials or MPs, I analyzed the parliamentary speeches of SAP and the media speeches of SD political actors. Even though the Sweden Democrats were not in power during this time period, their thoughts on securitizing migration in which they oppose any immigration acceptance, and their voice forwarded in news articles as well as their narratives are heavily cited in other previous literature due to their political stance. Therefore, they get spaces in this thesis, and I have included their statements in my analysis.

Media texts show mixed characters in this thesis. The editorials and journalistic articles from the largest official newspapers (Aftonbladet, Dagens Nyheter Svenska Dagbladet). Editorials are personal opinions; however, journalistic articles do not pursue a specific opinion. With a large readership in Sweden, all three newspapers play a significant role in society through their mediatized effect. Moreover, both Aftonbladet, Dagens Nyheter, and Svenska Dagbladet are considered politically independent which is yet another contributing factor to my choice. I found on their website, Dagens Nyheter describes themselves as “independently liberal” as well as “free from parties, organizations, and economic spheres of influence.” The other newspaper Svenska Dagbladet depicts itself as a “nationally distributed newspaper” where the “main mission is to tell, examine and reveal the most important news in and outside the country, in politics, culture, and business at the same time it’s known as the most negatively framing refugees. The last one is
Aftonbladet, which claims that their journalism's objective is to be accurate and trustworthy, and no allegiances—to a partner, an ideology, or anything else—are permitted to stand in the way of this.

In order to narrow down the number of articles and refine the research concerning articles touching upon the subject of securitization that comes with refugee crises and immigration. I have decided to intensify my search for the texts containing the words “refugee crises” and “securitization” which instantly gave me a vast palette of articles. In total, the search results offered me 30 articles from Aftonbladet, 25 articles from Dagens Nyheter, and 23 articles from Svenska Dagbladet containing the words “refugee crisis”, “securitization”, “threat” and “immigration”. In the end, the empirical material of the current study consisted of 18 articles, seven articles from Aftonbladet, three articles from Svenska Dagbladet, and eight articles from Dagens Nyheter. I have excluded others due to the limited scope of this paper. The articles qualify into the following categories: editorials, comments, journals, and feature articles, which will offer a greater variety of opinions and discourses to be analyzed. From the relatively large number of articles, my selection concentrated solely on eighteen media articles since they were best suited for the purpose of my study as they were the articles that mainly touched upon “securitization”, “migration policy” and “refugee crises”. They detailed how the refugee crisis was represented and framed in various national contexts. That’s why I only choose the articles that are suited to my purposes. Due to the popularity of the subject, the 2015 refugee crisis appeared in many articles. In the selection of texts, therefore, I discarded the articles with few themes, which is my main research area, and preferred the articles in which the research points. If more than half of the articles reported or commented on the refugee crisis or securitization in 2015/2017 and if those articles mention about refugee crisis of 2015, which broke out approximately in the middle of this period, as well as temporary immigration policy 2016 were included into the study. It might be said that some of the events coincide with key national events, such as the Swedish turn to restrictive policies by implementing a temporary immigration policy for example. This culminated in a total of 160 articles and opinion pieces that also included specific arguments for or against “securitization.” A total of 60 articles were excluded from the analysis group. Some of them were excluded because they only contained the term "migration" in my search tab and did not have any reference to the securitization research field. Others were not selected because their content did not primarily focus on "the securitization of migration in Sweden." I also drew upon a systematic review and text
analysis of English and Swedish language academic journal publications, dissertations, and thesis research among fields in order to gain background knowledge.

The material, for the analysis of discursive practices dealing with the securitization of migration policy, was gathered from the government’s websites, related newspapers homepages, Google Scholar, Divaportal, Sobiad, ERIC, Academia, Researchgate, EBSCOhost, and Web of Science. As I previously said, I began the data analysis by meticulously reviewing the media narratives, policy papers, and secondary literature, taking notes, coding the data, and then using the analytical principles of discursive institutionalism. In parallel to the qualitative coding, implementing conceptualizing the process makes an analytical review of significant policy changes and recent developments. The aim of the coding was to identify the shift in discourses present in the overall coverage of the refugee crisis, that is, the possible contexts in which the refugee crisis and securitization of migration were discussed. This means the mapping of discourses is based on all 45 articles, and the second part on ‘refugee crisis’ and ‘securitization’ is based on 80 articles. I coded the articles according to the following variables: political implementations, media outlet, section, size, genre, sources, frame, word use, and labeling of the crisis (e.g., refugee crises, storm, refugee wave, threat, security, border control), legitimization of securitization (the welfare state, institution fail, system collapse). The themes were identified after briefly skimming the headlines and first few lines and end of the articles. In a nutshell, the aim of the documents is to give an overview of the securitization of migration policy and the representation of ‘refugee crises’ in rhetorical frameworks in Sweden.

4.4. Ethical Consideration

During the research, it is often attempted to be as impartial as possible, with emphasis placed on the data itself. In order to improve the reliability and accuracy of this thesis by using a variety of data types and sources. Therefore, the subject of refugee crises has been examined from the framework of securitization, using a critical discourse analysis perspective, with the hope of shedding light on various aspects of the subject in the most comprehensive way. But, scholars Andrew Johnson (2012) and Robert Coles (1997) contend that researchers are a vital part of the research process, making perfect impartiality unachievable. Coles observes that in investigating the lives and perspectives of others, researchers must unavoidably deal with themselves and who
they are. This is to suggest that the beliefs we follow in society, as well as our personal experiences, surely impact what we pay attention to and what we dismiss.

5. Theoretical Framework

This chapter will introduce the theoretical framework which will assess dramatic changes in times of refugee crises, the main argument is the construction of refugee crises parallel to the securitization of migration. Hence, I utilized constructivism as a research paradigm in this thesis. As a social theory, constructivism provides theoretical lenses to comprehend how social reality is always being formed and created (Schwandt 1994). In terms of epistemology, I employed a social constructionist approach when doing my study. This school of thought's guiding principle is that reality is constructed socially (Gergen, 1985). As Gergen puts it “the terms by which the world is understood are social artifacts, that are historically positioned as one product of human interaction” (Gergen 1985, p. 267). Accounts of the world are communicated via common systems of understanding, most often spoken or written languages. These narratives are seen as a manifestation of interactions among people rather than the exterior statements of the speaker's inner thinking (such as cognition or purpose) (Ibid., p. 278).

It is essential to emphasize the fundamental concepts of the theory and explain how they relate to securitization in order to study social constructivism as the theoretical foundation of this thesis. The idea that state identity profoundly impacts state preferences and behaviors is one of the core tenets of constructivism (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001: 398). Additionally, constructivists argue that state identities are constructed in the social context of both domestic and foreign politics (ibid.). However, some constructivists contend that identity is primarily a domestic attribute that results from national ideologies of collective difference (Barnett, 1996; Berger, 1996; Risse-Kappen, 1996).

Considering that the constructivist concept focuses on constructing threats and also permits the identification of a referent object of security, it is extremely suitable for securitization. Social constructivism is a comprehensive philosophy. It has emerged as one of the most widely utilized approaches for analyzing security practices that connect to the meaning of state security based on state identity (Léonard, 2010, p.231-254). Furthermore, the social construction in which a security matter can be shaped can be constructed by a discursive process that prioritizes them (ibid). On the other hand, security is not a given or objective in constructivist rationale. Rather
than adhering to an abstract standard for what constitutes a security "threat," it is socially formed via words, actions, and interactions. Therefore, security is an area of negotiation between those claiming to speak for one group and individuals inside that group (McDonald, 2008a).

The majority of security-related research has exclusively addressed military actions, but in the context of refugees, the perception of threat is different. Wæver defines security as the stabilization of threatening relationships. He argues that security studies should explore the securitization of these non-military threats (Buzan, Wæver, 1998, p.4). The definitions and criteria that make up the concept of securitization are determined by the intersubjective presence of a threat to have significant political effects (Buzan; Wæver; 1998, p.25). When evaluating non-military threats, the discursive construction of specifying such concerns as security threats is very useful. It also allows for the designation of a referent object of security. It also permits the naming of a referent security object. This approach will thus be especially helpful for examining how refugees and asylum seekers might be portrayed as security concerns. The focus is on the collective generation of meaning which is formed and also affected by linguistic conventions and other social events (Gergen, 1985). For instance, the term "refugee" has a definition that is universally accepted and was formed via social interactions among members of the global community as a whole. Nevertheless, the rhetoric of the "refugee crisis," the term's underlying meaning started to shift due to prevalent stigmatizing and homogenizing discourses. This means that the "truth" and "knowledge" regarding the notion were recreated via social interactions and other social processes. In this sense, critical security studies and constructivism both aim to comprehend how people depict or construct information in social, linguistic, and historical settings (Schwandt 2000).

In essence, along with the critical studies, the constructivist theory questions the assumptions made regarding a particular situation and questions it in terms of domination built as a culture based on selective social historical, and economic values resulting in inequality. The view that language is social practice implies that it is a mode of action, which is always situated within a specific socio-historic context. In this understanding, discourse “both constitutes and is simultaneously constituted by social practices” (Van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999, p.92).

Security may be understood as identity or culture, which refers to how people and communities view themselves and claim to be a part of a society (Buzan, Kelstrup, Wæver, 1993, p.19). In addition, the authors offer this general definition of security: “... a common term with a distinct
meaning but variable in form.” “In the face of existential threats security implies surviving, yet various sectors have varied definitions of what an existential threat is” (Buzan, Wæver, 1998: 27). The focus of Burry Buzan and Ole Wæver’s (1998) work aims to understand in which how issues are securitized. The writers must classify what constitutes a security concern and what does not. First of all, it’s worth making the following distinction about security. Whereas international security has its roots in the history of power politics, social security is focused on individuals and is largely an economic issue (Buzan, Wæver, 1998, p.21). Furthermore, Buzan and Wæver assert that "social security" corresponds with the group and its identity. (Buzan, Wæver, 1998: 12). Collective identities and the steps taken to protect these "we identities" are related to societal security (Buzan, Wæver, 1998: 120). Issues like migration may put this "we identity" at threat of losing its identification (Buzan, Wæver, 1998: 120-121). Thus, society might respond to the threat of migration by engaging in local initiatives or by attempting to shift the issue into the political sphere, where it can be addressed through legislation and border control (Buzan, Waever, 1998: p.122)

By making an ontological presupposition, constructivists believe that actors are formed by the social milieu in which they are found, according to Finnemore and Sikkink (2001, p. 394). In light of this, during the 2015 refugee crisis, Sweden handled international migration in a distinct manner compared to other EU states, and to varying degrees of securitization, even though they accepted a similar number of asylum applicants per capita. More descriptively, considering the nuances of opposition to security, the following essential question is highlighted: What demonstrates why some nations are reluctant to assist and welcome refugees while others are open to doing so? A constructivist viewpoint that extends the examination of power beyond state actors and includes social agents and institutions is the most effective way to understand resistance. By taking into account norms, identities, and values—aspects frequently discounted by other theories—social constructivism is better able to explain why certain nations are more welcoming of migrants than others. Social constructivism, by incorporating these elements, provides a more comprehensive explanation. It recognizes that security concerns are not solely determined by military threats but also by socio-cultural and identity-related factors. Although realism has typically provided pretty rational justifications, the state-centric assumption of realism is threatened by its constrained understanding of power. Thus, this thesis uses constructivism to examine how this occurrence of migration was turned into a security concern and how the social environment of the securitizing
actors has an impact on this social construction. Consequently, can assist in informing relevant stakeholders and the general public on how to comprehend and respond to both the present and future refugee crises. The country's norms, culture, and identity are some of the most significant factors in determining acceptance or rejection. The social constructionist approach is the most appropriate theory for the Swedish case as it examines the causes of security concerns and policy changes from a socio-cultural perspective. Sweden has a tradition of generous and ambitious humanitarian assistance due to the identity of being a leading state in the role of tolerance of human rights. As requirements of culture and norms, as analyzed in government speeches and media articles, the European Union, and other member countries were called upon to share the burden of these crises. But at the same time, adherence to institutions and the structure of the system, which are among the most important determinants of the shift in Sweden, led to a limited number of refugees in the later stages of the crisis and the issue being evaluated within the framework of international agreements. Commitment to the (Geneva Convention).

A security threat will change over time and a state’s reaction to a perceived threat will also change and generate new security justifications accordingly. Wendt (1999) recognizes the way in which territories and boundaries are perceived is not as simple as a line on the map. The EU, for example, has adopted this very structure by decreasing the importance of internal borders and delimiting the power the EU has over its member states. As the sovereignty and boundaries of a member state change so does the way in which it will securitize against perceived threats.

All in all, the social and discursive construction of certain issues as threats to security is known as securitization (Wæver, O. 2004). The main argument supporting and legitimizing the framing of immigration as a security issue maintains that this perception is largely the product of political, social, and historical construction (Chebel D'Appolonia, 2012). Taking the issue of securitization of migration from a constructive point of view explains that conditions met by refugees may depend on the inclusive or exclusive responses of the host country. This shows how a country's belief systems, intertwined with historical, cultural, and social intricacies, may explain, and predict state action and attitude.

6. Analysis

The following chapter and subchapters will include a presentation of the analysis below in relation to the aim and research question of this thesis. The discursive practices in the field of migration
and refugee crises in Sweden will be analyzed in this chapter. Each document provides the reader with information on the processed material, which is subsequently debated and analyzed using the actor-based Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) methodology plus, the social constructionist approach. In answering the research questions, I aim to analyze how securitization manifests itself in the crisis atmosphere, which factors related to crises securitize migration, and how refugees and asylum seekers are portrayed as a security concern to their respective national identities and social security systems. Also, the change of rhetoric over time pointed out between different political actors and media outlets – (Törnberg & Törnberg, 2016; Taylor, 2014; Kabgani, 2013). Critical discourse analysis has the capacity to simultaneously investigate the overall discursive shift across multiple societal levels.

The analysis will be performed in two different stages. In the first step, discursive practices, namely the text and speeches, of political actors will be analyzed. After presenting the findings, this part explores the implications of those findings for the securitization of migration policy in the framework of the European refugee crisis. As well as how the rhetoric of security has been continually generated and reconstructed will be identified by using the theory of constructivism. Presenting migration poses a threat to security that must be dealt with by the use of extreme measures. The second step is how asylum seekers and refugees are presented and portrayed in Swedish media. Herein, an analysis of these thesis findings shows how refugee discourses have shifted from humanitarian to security threats over time and how discursive power relations have been shaped during this time period. Besides this, sheds light on how media and politicians give direction to the refugee crisis by framing and agenda setting will be discussed over text and speeches. Foucauldian discourse analysis considers e.g., how powerful use of language to strengthen or preserve their authority, or such ‘focus on power relationships in society, expressed through language and practices’ (Foucault, 1984).

6.1. Representation of Securitization in Swedish Migration Policy

The Prime Minister of the Swedish Liberal-Conservative four-party government urged all Swedes to get ready for a "huge immigration wave" in August 2014, outlining its official liberal posture at that time. The next speeches have a similar stance. The former moderate party PM Fredrik Reinfeldt stated “Open your hearts” in the election campaign (Rosén 2014). He demonstrates a stance in support of the nation's long tradition of openness, which stands in sharp
contrast to the prejudices against immigrants permeating politics throughout most of Europe. These two articles are indicative of the openness, tolerance, and welcoming nature of Swedish policy. Before the crises, the position of government towards migration was more open and generous. These and other similar humanitarian discourses with the end of 2015 left their places to the security discourses and the element of a threat along with the observed crises.

The spring of 2015 was marked by a discussion within the EU and an active role for Sweden in trying to promote shared responsibility in the migration issue. After a summit at the end of June, European leaders concluded that "Europe needs a well-balanced and geographically comprehensive migration strategy based on solidarity and responsibility" but also that it required "a strengthened management of the Union's external borders, in order to better manage the increased illegal migration flows" (Council of Europe, 2015).

In the meantime, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven upheld Sweden’s open-borders policy and declared in the middle of the 2015 refugee crisis:

“*My Europe does not build any walls; we help each other*” (Bolling A. Dagens Nyheter. 2015-09-06). ... *Sweden must continue to take responsibility in this. [...] It is not enough, all of Europe must do more. [...] The EU must greatly increase the reception of quota refugees* ... (Aftonbladet. 2015-09-06).

Sweden has repeatedly emphasized the common step with other EU member states. For instance, in one remark, two Scandinavian neighbors, Sweden and Denmark, were handling the European refugee crises in vastly different ways. The Swedish Minister of Justice criticized Denmark as being passive and irresponsible. ‘‘*I don't think that one may approach with the premise that this isn't my problem. So, just like everyone else, Denmark must accept responsibility. I don't feel the least bit ashamed of how Sweden is handling the problem. Compared to anybody else, we have assumed a lot more responsibility*’’ (Bæksgaard et. al. 2015, p. 1).

In October 2015, Stefan Löfven displayed a positive attitude toward the acceptance of refugees. His argument supported this, ‘‘*Sweden could manage the situation*’. The Prime Minister specifically responded to a query about the refugee problem in a press conference. Would Sweden be able to handle a great deal of refugees? Stefan Löfven's response was:
“Yes, we can accomplish this. if all EU member states share responsibilities. if Sweden's municipalities assume accountability and support one another. if we work together. Amazing efforts are being undertaken right now throughout Sweden. We will achieve a lot when we work together” (Dagens Nyheter, 2015-10-04).

In the same interview, Stefan Löfven reported the following:

“ We have created a budget that doesn't cut taxes or welfare benefits” (Dagens Nyheter, 2015-10-04).

These assertions present a favorable image. First, the prime minister conveys the idea that Sweden is capable of coping with the rising number of asylum seekers. Second, it conveys the notion that increased refugee immigration does not clash with measures for economic development and welfare provisions by asserting that no modifications to the present budget are necessary.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development reports that Sweden received 163,000 asylum applicants in 2015, the greatest per-capita inflow of any OECD nation. This is a considerable number for a nation with just 10 million people. However, it was hard to sustain this level over the long run. The increased bureaucratic burden due to excessive overcrowding was a risk to the system, primarily due to the rising demand for various essential services such as education, housing, and healthcare.

The migratory flows pose serious problems for how the society functions, which is a component of Swedish security. The Swedish minister of foreign affairs, for example, expressed concern in DN (30/10/15):

.... they (a Swedish municipality) are struggling to meet its financial obligations; as a result, 200 children are unable to attend school owing to a lack of facilities; social services are at breaking point; and in an interview with DN on October 30, Margot Wallström says that there is one point: refugee reception becomes such a strain on Swedish society that "we can't handle more" (Stenberg, 2015) and it won't be long before the package of measures is worked out. Eventually, the entire system will crumble.

On the other hand, the national self-image as a "humanitarian forerunner" was frequently criticized and even derided, particularly in editorials but also in certain parliamentary remarks.
For instance, a politician from Sweden's largest right-wing Sweden Democrats (SD) party stated that ‘’... border control was necessary for Sweden's sake in order to maintain the country's current asylum system’’ (DN 10/11/15). Lots of people are aware that our systems cannot function with 190,000 new arrivals every year since they would eventually collapse... We want to give a worthy welcome to those newcomers (...), ...We think that a decent society to live in is one that is generous but also one that functions well (Stenberg, 2015, p. 8).

For instance, the SD offered its viewpoint on international cooperation and refugee policy, normalizing the function that such a party plays in Swedish political debate. Three SD representatives wrote an essay at the peak of the long summer of migration that mentioned Denmark's restrictive measures and stated the following:

......the efficient policies of our Nordic neighbors are entirely in accordance with the [Geneva] convention and nothing prevents us from following their example’ (Bieler et al., 2015, p. 6).

It is important to note that the discourse emphasizes the importance of international institutions and legal frameworks, their capacities, and limitations, and even their directives, as demonstrated by the reference to the Geneva Convention by SD politicians.

Swedish Foreign Minister Margot Wallström tweeted and stated that ‘’An acute/grave refugee crisis merits taking political responsibility’’ (@margotwallstrom, 2015/11/04). The first dignitaries of securitization started to arrive. This tweet, which is based on the evaluative legitimation method that builds the crises as "acute" or "grave," is especially important since it comes from SAP's Margot Wallström, who is in fact regarded as an "icon" of Swedish foreign and humanitarian policy on a global scale. Her voice, hence, lends further legitimacy to government policy and its need to be changed.

According to Deputy Prime Minister Åsa Romson, the situation was "not sustainable," and the government needed to take action by urging a significant number of asylum seekers to temporarily apply to other nations in order to give Sweden a breath (regeringen.se/artiklar/2015/11).

Major pressures are noted by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), especially regarding housing, healthcare, education, and social services, but also for other significant societal activities (prop.2015/16:67, p. 8), (Grönlund, Marmorstein & Kasurinen, 2015/ 11/11). These factors contributed to the perception of refugee issues as crises, thus paving the way for the
securitization of migration policy. The major threat observed is the danger of Institutional breakdown and consequent collapse of the system.

Just over two months after saying "My Europe does not build walls", the Prime Minister announced at a press conference that Sweden would introduce identity checks as one of the tightening measures in its refugee policy on November 24, 2015. Stefan Löfven and his government's abrupt restructuring of the refugee and asylum policy can be seen as a typical example of political reversal. The prime minister first gave a high-profile speech about supporting a welcoming refugee policy, his government mounts later introduced proposals that contradicted the policy they had previously advocated. According to the state authorities the threat of the ”refugee crisis” was everywhere.

Stefan Löfven at the same press conference stated that;

…. Sweden has the desire and the purpose to accept responsibility for the immigrant population.
At the same time, he noted that: …in the entire EU, Sweden has received the most refugees per Swedish citizen. An average of 100 school classes' worth of kids and teenagers arrived in Sweden on a weekly basis ("Sveriges radio- Skarpta Krav på asylsökande", 24 November 2015). He emphasized the burden of the responsibility they carry.

On 24 November 2015, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven (S) and former Deputy Prime Minister Åsa Romson (MP) presented the government's new proposal for migration measures which, among other things, means that the Aliens Act is changed temporarily to adapt to minimum requirements according to EU law and international conventions. With this proposal, the government presented a package of measures aimed at creating a "breathing space" for Swedish refugee reception (Regeringskansliet, 2015a, Holm & Svensson, 2016). It is a temporary change in the law that will apply for three years. Together with refugees as well as those in need of alternative protection and others in need of protection must all have a temporary residence permit, with the exception of children and families who were registered before the new rules were presented (Regeringskansliet, 2015a). First time announced that ID checks are to be introduced on all public transport modes in Sweden (Regeringskansliet, 2015a, Holm & Svensson, 2016, Wierup, Carlsson & Sköld, 2015). The reason for this clear signaling policy is probably that it was in the Swedish government's interest to put a stop to the reception of refugees. At the end of 2015, the government declared that “the present situation in a general sense a serious threat towards “public order” and “internal
security” (Proposition 2015/16:67, p.7), and “the floods of migration are accompanied by acute challenges for authorities and the overall function of society” (Proposition 2015/16:67, p.8). The government's legislative proposal is made considering the aforementioned conditions and to guarantee that the fundamental societal roles are not entirely superseded. These additional actions provide the government with the authority to take exceptional measures where there is a "serious threat" to public order or the inner security of the country caused by a ‘large flow of asylum seekers’ (prop.2015/16:67, p.8,9). Traveling from other countries to Sweden by bus, rail, etc. should involve various border control and identification checks when there is a "serious threat". In that regard, the government will be entitled to present sanctions-related rules (prop.2015/16:67, p.11). The present situation is frequently mentioned in the bill and is referred to as a major "threat" or "crisis" to the internal security and public order of the nation. Securitization within the social order occurs through the tightening of border control.

Social Democrat politician Matilda Ernkrans tweeted and stated that the government exhibits leadership in extremely challenging circumstances. Defending the right to asylum and pressuring the EU to take action” (@ernkrans 24/11/15). This tweet includes further legitimizing voice. After 2015, it became necessary to undertake measures to prevent Sweden from being perceived as being more charitable than other European nations. With the intention of increasing the number of refugees seeking asylum abroad, the level was proposed to be temporarily adjusted to the minimum level of other EU nations. This new policy construction presents measures taken toward refugees while outlining its main objective. "Temporarily" restricting refugee admission and diverting them to other nations is important to stress.

The government maintained that limitations were necessary in the autumn of 2015 to maintain "order and security" and on November 24, 2015, in a short amount of time, Sweden's image went from being one of the most "generous" in Europe in terms of immigration to one of the most restrictive ones. To cut down on the number of entering migrants, they imposed tough regulations. With these measures "The Social Democrats are now using the same harsh language – rhetorical threat, migration flood, urgent response – that was previously associated with the far-right nativists of the Sweden Democrats back in 2015” claims journalist James Traub (2021). The speech on November 24, 2015, at the same time resulted in furthering the debate about how Sweden (and Swedish politics) should shape its immigration and asylum policy. It is observed how political
action justified by SAP as a political actor behind reconstruction and the political discourses mediated by SAP.

The following year, the Swedish parliament passed a new, restrictive migration law in July 2016. The likelihood that asylum applicants will receive residence permits is constrained by legislation. Based on the findings, the legislative proposals constructed and represented the issue is, in this case, Sweden's large immigrant population and the difficulties it imposed. The notion that migration is a "potential threat" and a circumstance that has to be handled is sparked by policy recommendations and politicians' statements. A political reconstruction needs to be managed. Irregular migration is such a problem because it is the part of the overall immigration issue that is most likely to be constructed as a threat. A few scholars have noted that a variety of Western societies today have a tendency to view immigration through a security lens by claiming immigration to be some kind of threat (see e.g., Guiraudon 2003; Huysmans 2000; 2006b; Mitsilegas, Monar & Rees 2003; Tsoukala 2005; Van Munster 2009).

The external pressures generated drastic change (Pierson, 1996) and refugee crises suddenly became the most prioritized issue, and securitization manifested in migration policy. The findings demonstrate that immigration policy in Sweden has become increasingly security-focused, which has enabled the Swedish government to propose and enact novel laws and extraordinary measures that have shifted the emphasis from refugee rights and security to national security. Later, the regulation was extended on a few occasions to conform to the minimum standards set forth by EU legislation (Schierup & Scarpa 2017; SOU 2020).

The liberal, multicultural welfare state of Sweden, which was formerly protected from the effects of the global economy by protective national policies, has grown more conditional and less generous as a result of being increasingly subjected to the logic of the market. Economic circumstances significantly influence people's opinions towards migration, according to Dustmann’s and Preston's (2007) argument.

The Swedish Minister of Finance highlighted the threat that immigration poses to the welfare state in a newspaper interview in December 2017:

''... a welfare state cannot continuously grow. This was really evident to us in 2015. There is no doubt that other European nations provide more housing and educational options. If you look
In here to be emphasized refugees are in need of being taken care of; that is the burden should be undertaken by other European countries too. They are depicted as a notion of one unique group seeking housing and other types of assistance from the Swedish welfare system (prop. 2015/16:67, pp. 7,8,9,13). Through this concept, refugees are presented exclusively as a burden to the Swedish economy, due to the manner in which they alter the fundamentals governing the nation's economic and political stability. The use of the words is particularly strong in conveying the image of migrants as a burden to the Swedish welfare system by referring to migrants as an economic burden, the discourse, particularly in Dagens Nyheter, reaffirms and reproduces the political discourse of the government. This underlines the financial cost of migration and its management, particularly the financial load disturbing the economy and system breakdown owing to the rising requirements that come with the migrants. If the perceived threat arising from the crisis is directed at the welfare system, then securitization takes place in the economic field.

Other than in any European country the most frequent theme coded within this discourse was system collapse, which implied that the institutional system was on the verge of collapsing because of the inflow of irregular migration, or that local or municipal services and institutions were overloaded and thus unable to provide immigrants with sufficient housing, support, health services or schooling. Overall, the institutions in Sweden play a vital role in maintaining the country’s high living standard, social welfare economic stability. These institutions are crucial for Sweden’s reputation as a prosperous and well-governed nation. In constructivist theory, institutions play a significant role in shaping state behaviors.

Securitization manifests itself in every part of a system, a variety of referent items are used to illustrate how refugee crises pose a danger to Swedish culture, the economy, and the social order. Analysis of the proposals plainly indicates that protecting the Swedish welfare state and its institutions during the European refugee crisis requires a drastic adjustment in immigration policy. The potential risk referenced the projected negative effects of future immigration on the welfare system as well as the perceived inability of governmental institutions to handle the issue financially and administratively. Also, this attitude was justified in light of the way that the majority of other EU nations viewed accepting migrants (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017).
In this context, one of the most prominent reasons for the policy change and the resulting shift in discourse is the perspective of the EU on the ‘refugee crisis’. As we understand from the statement of the Swedish Prime Minister in early 2015, Sweden was actually ready to take on this refugee responsibility if acted jointly. The absence of a coordinated policy response to the crisis in the EU left Sweden alone in this issue. Significant discursive shifts were brought about by this scenario, which served as a watershed in the Swedish setting. This policy change can be explained by Sweden's position and relationship with the EU, as well as the EU's limited capacity to formulate any rational solutions to the asylum influx.

Several additional reasons can also be given due to the uniqueness of the Swedish case, most often that Sweden had taken on an overwhelming responsibility in the refugee crisis, drawing heavily on the idea of Sweden as a morally good nation. The most obvious argument for the changes was therefore predicated on a correlative narrative about 'asylum magnets', i.e., that favorable conditions in recipient countries are attracting more asylum seekers to countries that offer good conditions, hence granting countries with restrictive policies an opportunity to avoid their equitable sharing of responsibility (Hagelund, 2020). Overall, the official argument stressed continuity by making attribution to various norms of legitimacy, –including humanitarianism, international cooperation, the Swedish welfare state, social rights, and the Swedish work strategy– as well as the gravity of the situation and the requirement for immediate action (Hagelund, 2020).

Another key finding is that liberal rhetoric and views about Europe predominate in Swedish politics. Regarding European liberalism in compliance with the 1951 UN Geneva (Refugee) Convention and various EU laws, European countries are obliged to offer asylum or other forms of protection to refugees who can prove they are escaping war or other unfavorable conditions (The History of European Union 2015). Sweden, however, extended its approach beyond what was expected under the Convention, applying a broader definition of a political refugee and welcoming refugees on humanitarian grounds. "This likely positioned Swedish refugee policies as one of the most liberal and permissive in the world" (Schierup, Ålund 1991:22).

However, on the other hand, as an indicator of liberalist tendency, irregular migration can sometimes be seen as a challenge to safeguarding the rights of the domestic population and the EU member states legitimize restrictions on migration when it comes to outsiders entering the union. These restrictions are often justified as measures to safeguard liberal values and the cultural
identity of the European Union, as well as to prevent economic migrants from potentially exploiting social welfare systems and competing for employment opportunities (Hafner, 2016). The argument is that governments have greater responsibilities towards their own citizens in comparison to any other group (Weiner1996: 171-197). Liberal states are committed to the principles of moral equality for individuals and humanity, yet they tend to apply these principles primarily within their own communities, often adopting restrictive immigration policies that limit access to foreigners. Therefore, in order to protect liberal values, the states make an effort to keep out economic migrants who are free to ride on the welfare system. Through 2019, in Sweden, the average household will face a tax increase of approximately $1700 per year as a result of irregular immigration (Gudmundson 2015).

The social constructivist approach suggests that the impact of the refugee crisis on EU migration policy is not solely attributed to economic factors but also to considerations related to identities and norms. The reactions of European countries to refugees take into account economic, political, and cultural aspects, reflecting their norms, identities, and interests. Therefore, the securitization concern is clearly observed in the area of Sweden's culture and lifestyle, in addition to the welfare state. The arrival of newcomers, especially those coming from illiberal, non-European cultures, poses a potential threat to the culture and values of Western societies. These concerns may lead to restrictions on immigration or more stringent border controls as a response to perceived threats to the existing social fabric and cultural norms. Balancing liberal values and domestic interests in the context of immigration can be a complex challenge for many European nations. There are signs that throughout the second half of the examined period (2015-2017), these worries and framings grew in Sweden. Although not as prominent as in some other European countries, a recurring identification of “we” can be noticeable in Sweden as well. There is a clear pattern in the speeches of policy actors and media narratives about 'us' and 'them' as potential sources of threats and problems.

‘In social constructivism, identity is a significant concept as state identity fundamentally shapes state preferences and actions” (Finnemore and Sikkink, 2001: 398). Securitization takes place when concerns are acknowledged as posing a threat to the preservation of a group's identity (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams, 2015: 98). Therefore, when securitizing actors highlight their national identity or underscore the threat to national identity, they can be argued to be attempting
a securitizing move. According to constructivism, ideas are constructed by actors depending on their interests (Büyüktanır, 2016).

The argument that demographic change is the idea that people from another culture create a risk because of the incompatibility with the culture of the majority is the hearth of “culture”, “new” or “xeno” racism (e.g., Barker, 1981; Baliban, 1991). Subsequently, the ongoing demographic change arising from immigrants and asylum seekers is accompanied by the idea of social and cultural change. The threat topos in the editorials are frequently expressed as questions about the society "we" (implicitly Sweden, who are said to share a "cultural affinity") want in the future. This threat is particularly regarded as a demographic risk. For example, What Sweden will we have 45 years from now? (ScD, Svenska Dagbladet SvD, 2015, July 1).

Another way of framing the issue was as a danger to "Swedish values" and "Swedish culture" posed by immigrant Muslims. Islam and Muslims have been referred to as "our biggest foreign threat" by a Swedish daily (Äkesson 2009, 2010; Orrenius 2021). The cultural threat was conceived as targeting values such as democracy, freedom, and gender equality (E. M. Goździak and I. Main, 2020).

Consequently, The reputation of Sweden as the model of a tolerant, equable, multicultural welfare state dates back many years. However, some researchers have asserted in recent years that this has altered, particularly with respect to mass migration (Schierup & Ålund, 2011). During the observed time period 2015-2017, there was a significant change (Byström & Frohnert 2017), compared to the year 2014. Before the crises, the "open your hearts" phrase that former Swedish PM Fredrik Reinfeldt had been using as late as 2014 (Rosén 2014) shifted through the " borders restriction" as a result of the securitization of migration. The open borders were never as popular, and during the 2014 elections, many voters switched from Reinfeldt's Moderate Party to the far-right, anti-immigration Sweden Democrats. Immigration was for the first time regarded as the most significant "problem in society" by the Swedish public between 2015 and 2017, whereas other topics that had previously been rated highly, such as, “the economy” or “labor market” – now came to be placed relatively low (Martinsson & Andersson, 2019, p.41). The government formally declared its desire for permanent immigration limitations in May 2018 (Dagens Nyheter 2018). The Swedish parliament was recently presented with a security package that received approval from the majority of other parliamentary parties and included regulations that would make it more
challenging to enter Sweden legally and less appealing to stay there. In receiving nations of the global North, the prevailing discourse portrays migration as a challenge that has to be overcome (de Haas, 2005).

6.2. Media coverage “refugee crisis” in Sweden

As one of the purposes of this thesis is to delve into the evolving dynamics of media discourse on migration crises over time, the analysis will focus on the relevant texts published in the three newspapers. The goal is to uncover significant changes in the topics covered during discussions about securitization and refugee crises. Social constructivism was selected as the general viewpoint of this thesis as it is most suitable for the purpose of the study which is to evaluate media discourse on immigration in order to discover how the category is filled with a given meaning, or, in other words, socially constructed. For the theoretical section of the thesis, it would be suitable to center on how a specific society's members perceive immigration and its diverse ramifications, as well as how these perceptions shape the discourse surrounding national immigration policies. In other words, how migration and its effects can be perceived or constructed by the immigrant-receiving society will be discussed from the media dimension.

For national policymakers in Sweden, the refugee problem wasn't an urgent concern at the beginning of 2015. The media were more active than politicians in raising the problem to the public front. Hultén, (2009) argues that the government's migration policies are helpful in comprehending the ways in which migrants and refugees are presented in the media as a context. As the policy in the Swedish context moved towards securitization, the media discourse also began to change. In this regard, the media is a very important forum for the discussion, evaluation, and final proposal of policy.

2015 was a dramatic year in European history. Thousands of people crossed the Mediterranean due to war and hardship, and many of them drowned. The happenings were heavily mediatized. The visuals were impressive; some were terrifying, and others were painful. The hardship of the migrants, the difficulty of managing an increasing influx of newcomers, and the trade-offs between responding to the global humanitarian crisis and defending national welfare systems were all vigorously contested in Scandinavia as well. Therefore, this thesis concentrates on the years 2015 to 2017 as those that saw a significant change in Swedish immigration laws. I examine how the media portrayed the massive influx of migrants, afterward referred to as the "refugee crisis". When
the Swedish case was examined at the media level, different perspectives can be found in newspapers about understanding the construction of the crises and how to deal with them.

Agenda-setting and framing are the two primary subfields of research in this area that may be used to analyze the effects of media coverage. The former is based on the classical claim that news tells us what we’ll think about, while the latter argues that news also tells us how we’ll think about it (McCombs, 2004).

As such, agenda-setting presents an overview of the manner in which the refugee crisis was constructed in the media and discusses the particular type of representation associated with it, news framing on the other hand, is concerned with how an issue or topic is presented in the media and the specific perspective or "frame" through which it is portrayed. Framing would involve how the media portrays refugees, such as emphasizing them as victims seeking safety or depicting them as threats to national security. Particularly within the domain of media coverage related to refugee crises. Framing can be divided into issue-specific frames and generic news frames due to fundamental differences (Brüggemann & D’Angelo, 2018; de Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001). Issue-specific frames (such as economic, cultural, and security frames) related to multiculturalism and welfare system concerns are intrinsically connected to certain topics like immigration, or even more specifically, the refugee crisis. On the other hand, generic frames (such as the victimization, conflict, or negativity frame) are argued to transcend thematic boundaries and are closely related to routines of journalism (de Vreese, Boomgaarden, & Semetko, 2011). The frames most frequently used in the media may differ according to individual immigrant groups but are more closely tied to the political climate, the culture of the state, or the immigration discourses emphasized in news articles. Compared to states like France, Germany, Denmark, and the UK, media coverage in Sweden usually adopted a less problematic approach to immigration (Hagelund, 2020: p.6-7). For example, while the UK media prefers the word "migrant" and frequently cites economic concerns, Swedish media is more likely to use phrases like "refugee" or "asylum-seeker." (Pruitt, 2019: p.387). The publications were first rather outspoken about the moral need to accept migrants in line with governmental policy. Therefore, in the Swedish case, cultural values play a crucial role in being open and righteous. “Most of the Swedish values are universal” (Sandelid, 2015) from Svensk Dagbladet. More authors said that Sweden must defend its values and should safeguard its principles, be "harsh but fair" (Ludvigsson, 2016). Most frequently,
media-related research into the immigration discourse in Europe emphasizes the framing of cultural and economic problems (Aalberg et al., 2012; Costello & Hodson, 2011; Florack, Piontkowski, Rohmann, Balzer, & Perzig, 2003; van der Linden & Jacobs, 2016). However, in the case of Sweden, the analysis that follows focuses on the selection of articles falling within the institutional responsibility frame. This selection is two-thirds of all the articles found in the study and is taken to be the most significant in understanding the construction of the sense of crisis in Sweden.

Since it aligns with my research focus and objectives, I will illustrate the prevalent issue-specific frames and provide examples of other frames, such as conflict frames, responsibility frames, and threat frames from relevant newspapers, as found in framing literature. The majority of research looking at how immigration is covered in the news concentrates on the issue-specific frame and analyzing the significance of economic, welfare, cultural, or security issues in migration coverage (Strömbäck, 2017). The study demonstrates that conflict frames are among the most often employed in political discourse and are essential for balancing the arguments made while covering political problems (De Vreese, 2001, 2004). The conflict-framing example was also evident in the Swedish case; in a related piece discussing various viewpoints on how to handle immigration in the wake of the Brussels incident, the story's headline focused on European solidarity. ‘’Whether we want it or not, Europe as a whole will be influenced’’ (Dagens Nyheter, 2016) and it continues by emphasizing the importance of Swedish involvement in handling the crisis. ‘’Help Greece to prepare’’ (ibid).

On the other hand, the responsibility frame is identified with a solution to an issue attributed to a government or a group. In the coverage of how the Swedish Migration Board (Migrationsverket) has to assume duty for determining the age of children arriving as refugees in the country efficiently ‘’No stop for refugee boats’’ (Dagens Nyheter, 2016). Besides this, several publications criticize how the EU handled the process and address building up adequate resources. Without sometimes taking into account the European context, which is equally complicated and crucial to the national atmosphere, it is challenging to research the discursive practices surrounding Swedish refugee policy in the area of migration. Hence, while not exhaustive, this thesis does contain instances of the crisis process within the European Union context.
The European Union reached an agreement with Turkey in 2016 to stop refugees from entering Europe in response to a rising reaction against the entry of more than a million migrants in the late summer and early autumn of 2015. The deal between the EU and Turkey was a major theme in many of the articles utilizing the responsibility frame. “Skepticism towards the EU’s agreements with Turkey” (Aftonbladet, 2016) which conveys a critical perspective. Aftonbladet continues with, in the coverage, the deal was referred to as “Europe is building new iron curtain” (2016), even more strongly implying opposition to the agreement. That dealt only with the political issue rather than the underlying humanitarian one. Since then, Europe has made ineffective attempts to assist the African and Middle Eastern countries that are currently hosting the vast majority of people who have fled the violence and tyranny in the area.

Lastly, one of the frames examined in the articles of Swedish newspapers is the threat frame. This framing is employed to point out a danger that mass migration or immigrants present to society, people, or culture. Political behavior and social psychology literature have suggested that elite attitudes and public opinion towards immigration are largely influenced by perceptions of threat; general intolerance and rejection of immigrants have been shown to go hand in hand with both physical insecurity and perceived threats to national community and identity (McLaren 2003; Lahav 2004). The critique of securitization and (threat) discourse also took place in Dagens Nyheter, which additionally raises the case for better treatment of refugees on the basis of regulations. It is further emphasized that Swedish cultural history maintains a moral basis for Sweden to continue to meet its own quality of multicultural integration. With this Sweden is seen as a virtuous country with strong institutional foundations that typically contribute to global good. Except this, Aftonbladet takes a somewhat indifferent path from this newspaper as the articles since they discuss the issue of xenophobia (as opposed to institutional inefficiency) and the moral obligation to take in those fleeing conflict. The articles also discuss the importance of immigrants to Swedish society and offer a coherent institutional justification for their institutional integration. The analysis then proceeds to show that the refugee crisis was mostly discussed in terms of a challenge to the regular functions of bureaucratic institutions and approached in terms of management and containment— institutional responsibility – which is the most frequent threat frame in the selection of newspaper articles.
Restrictive asylum policies were justified by using mainstream media and political narratives about the refugee crisis, which were generally uncontested (Abdelhady et al., 2020; Barthoma et al., 2020). However, framing the influx of refugees as an institutional crisis resulted in a significant change in asylum policies, which were tacitly accepted on pragmatic grounds (Abdelhady et al., 2020). Such a strategy can be taken for granted in a society where emphasis on organizational efficiency and pragmatic approaches to problems are held in high regard (Graham, 2003). The analysis of mainstream newspapers that are provided here tackles the self-understanding of Sweden’s image and the cultural justification of restrictive asylum policies.

In one example, the authors of an article published on 4 February 2015 declared:

.... that ‘opening our hearts is not enough … the consequences [of refugee migration] are seen as regards to dependency, housing, segregation, and child poverty’ (Sonesson and Westerlund, 2015: p.5).

The article proceeded to mention that ‘the Swedish social model is not adapted for extensive refugee migration of low-skilled people’ and urged political actors to ‘assess the capacity and limitations of Swedish society to receive and integrate people fleeing to our country’ (Sonesson and Westerlund, 2015: p.5).

Another example posed the question …. ‘Where is the Limit to Welfare?’

In this editorial, the author argued that ‘the conflict between the welfare state and free movement has been known for a long time. Nevertheless, Sweden seems to respond by continuously expanding welfare commitments. In the long run, something has to go, either mobility or welfare, maybe both’ (Gudmundson, 2015b, p. 4). These two articles question Swedish welfare policies, and specifically the principle of ‘The People’s Home’ (folkhemmet, see e.g., Lawler, 2003). This vision of universal welfare, coined by Social Democrat leader Per Albin Hansson in 1927, has – at least from the early 1930s until the late 1980s – been considered sacred in Swedish public culture.

Nevertheless, in the short run, this understanding gave way to regulatory policy; there is a story about numbers and carrying capacity in this argument. Based on cognitive reasoning, Sweden can only take a limited number of refugees. Social cohesion will be threatened if there are too many (Hagelin A, 2020). There is no set limit, but given the mounting pressure, it is vital to restrict
numbers regardless of the precise numbers. An editorial published on 6 November 2015 explained that:

... It is a bitter fact that the Migration Agency and the municipalities are overburdened, not a calculated, intentional exaggeration (Dagens Nyheter, 2015d, p. 4). This "painful reality" continued the next day in an article, which expressed that:

... However, it is clear that there might be serious societal turmoil if Sweden fails to properly integrate newcomers. Right now, we don't even have enough tents for everyone, and finding shelter is at least difficult (Dagens Nyheter, 2015c, p. 4).

In this line of narration, notions of collapse, challenges, tensions, and responsibility come together to explain the institutional problems associated with refugees and asylum seekers.Implicitly understood is that these challenges are temporary, and hence the need for temporary recourse to extreme measures. It is noteworthy that, at times, a reference to morality and values is made in order to deny possible misunderstandings that the author supports the closure of the border based on value judgments. Border control restrictions needed more of a concern for the protection of the welfare system. However, the most common legitimization of border control in the Swedish press was Argument 8: for the safety of the refugees. Several of the articles refer to international obligations and suggest that border control will be necessary if Sweden is to guarantee a functioning asylum system and provide shelter for asylum seekers. The portrayal of Sweden as a nation of humanitarianism merges with the sustainability discourse when border control is introduced: border control is introduced because Sweden is a solidarity nation on the verge of system collapse (Abdelhady, 2020).

Moreover, Baker (2008) finds that the terms ‘refugees’ and ‘asylum seekers’ are connected to an economic burden, like financial coercion on the welfare system. Connected with the welfare system media frames of assumed economic competitiveness related to migrants led to supporting restrictive migration policies and less support for measures that empower migrants (Costello & Hodson, 2011). Consequently, these news reports frequently focus on myths about the number of migrants or their economic effect, possibly legitimizing ethnocentric and nationalist discourse or undermining attempts to implement policies that would promote the long-term integration of migrants and refugees (Grobet, 2014; Staglianó, 2014).
As analyzed in Swedish media coverage of refugees, frames are considered interpretive frameworks that represent ‘windows on the world’ via which people have discovered more about themselves and others (Tuchman, 1978). In accordance with research on media frames, media coverage depends on a number of specific frames to convey the news to audiences, and different frames might affect readers' or viewers' impressions of public issues (McCombs et al., 1997; Scheufele, 1999; McCombs and Ghanem, 2001). The period right after the crisis articles also characterize directing public ideas on the refugee issue.

In democratic societies, news media plays a key role as a central source of political information and a forum for public debates like immigration. For example, evidence suggests that the use of news media is associated with political knowledge, interests, participation, and trust (Curran et.al. 2014; Norris 2000; Shehata & Strömbäck, 2018; Stömbäck & Shehata 2010). There was great interest in the analysis and presentation of precise statistics highlighting the differences between past and current changes in refugee quotas in the media. It is not surprising that Swedish media outlets covered migration extensively in 2016, as 29,000 people sought refuge in Sweden during that year. The two front pages news noted that temporary border controls had been instituted in Sweden and that this might result in an increase in the number of asylum seekers (Aftonbladet 2015, p. 1; Olsson 2015a, p.1). In the first period, the application of border controls has been seen six times on the first page in Aftonbladet and Dagens Nyheter. In the second period, articles that concentrate on an approximate increase in the number of people seeking asylum in Sweden and securing the internal border controls, such as those from Svenska Dagbladet, related to these border controls.

"New camera technology should bolster border security, apprehend traffickers, and want criminals" (Rogberg 2017, p. 7). Negative tones started to appear in Swedish articles in proportion to the policy chosen.

“ID checks are no longer required, but border controls have become stricter” (Lönegård, Claes, and Rogberg, Salomon 2017, p.7.).

A study by the Swedish survey organization Novus Retriever found that in 2016 and 2017, border controls, identification checks, and issues flowing from the influx of migrants dominated the media's focus. The so-called refugee crisis was the subject of about 250,000 stories. The "refugee crisis" and the Syrian civil war were subjects of more concern among Swedes, according to Novus
Retriever. The situation was critical because of the increase in the population of refugees. As migration issues came into focus, the editorial tone shifted to a more negative reception of migrants.

In a nutshell, the analysis of media representations is an essential first stage in determining how dynamically media discourse and social responses interact since they have the power to influence public opinion. The University of Gothenburg's SOM Institute, which conducts yearly surveys on social issues in Sweden, concluded that the subject of migration and the arrival of refugees had taken the top spot among concerns held by Swedes. The justification behind the study, as previously indicated, was that as mass media have considerable influence over what information is reported and what, who, and how something is analyzed, they also have considerable influence on people's attitudes. In other words, the way the media chooses to present reality influences our thoughts, perspectives on other people, and political beliefs (Kara, S. and Kjellgren, T. 2016). Through the coverage, choice of language, and emphasis on certain topics, the media can either highlight or downplay the securitization of various issues. The rhetorical choices we use have an effect on us and determine how people perceive the world, which can lead to changes in public opinion (Kara, S. and Kjellgren, T. 2016). Therefore, CDA has been widely used in studies on media discourse because what is published in the media frequently reflects societal trends and processes (Lippmann, 1922; Fairclough, 2001; Carvalho, 2008). Applying the securitization paradigm, it also follows that if asylum seekers and refugees are portrayed in the media as a security concern, this will also help to exacerbate people's fears of refugees, political marginalization, and the perception that refugees are criminals (Kara and Kjellgren, 2016:1).

The total population of Sweden is frequently subdivided into "immigrants" and "Swedes" in Swedish media. These two groups are separated based on different fundamental characteristics, and as a result, the pre-existing "us" and "them" mentality and the actions stemming from it, are being reconstructed (SOU 2006:21). The results of the research in the SOU 2006:21 report, the mass media contributes to structural segregation via its nationalist and the discursive construction of narratives about the relationships between various ethnic groups that emphasize "othering" as a centerpiece. The news logic and a colonial worldview have worked together to build "them" as threatening, problematic, and bothersome in the news media's reportage on "immigrants" (Brune, 2004; SOU, 2006:21).
The examined publications used negative language several times in their reporting. "Illegal," "wave," "pressure," and the word "ström," as in "flyktingström," which means something like wave, stream, or tide of refugees, were among the adjectives used to characterize the situation. It had been used so frequently that it had lost its positive connotation. As was previously indicated, utilizing aquatic phrases like stream, tide or wave invariably creates a powerful metaphor for the waves of migrants that would flood the territory if steps were not taken to defend it, which can support the justification for the actions taken to safeguard the territory from this (Tsoulaka, 2005).

.... "the stream of refugees about to spend their first night in Sweden never seems to stop” Aftonbladet (2015-11-12) in Kara and Kjellgren 2016:33"

... “If the refugee flow does not stop, it will get much worse. Nothing could possibly be more terrible than this, and the government must act immediately” Aftonbladet (2015-11-19) in Kara and Kjellgren 2016:33”…

The research also discovered that the reader was aware that something was top-prier and acute since the word "storm" had been so politicized and securitized. As this section has demonstrated, there is plenty of verification that the Swedish media frequently employ securitized language while reporting on immigrants and asylum seekers. Media messages have an effect on people (Kara and Kjellgren, 2016). Their implications as regards knowledge, the structure, and the content of societal cognizance of any social group are remarkable (Tsoukala, 2005:173).

As observed in the above journalistic articles, journalistic discourse also needs to be seen in a broader context, and the language, tone, and expressions used by journalists are likely to be reflections of the language used in society at large, but at the same time stemming from journalistic traditions. "The media's portrayal of societal concerns will depend to a large extent on the preferences and choices of media professionals, including prevailing news values, but will necessarily be based on the ways in which other social actors construct problems in a wide variety of discourses" (Carvalho, 2008). As a result, when the situation is presented as a humanitarian one, inspires feelings of sympathy and makes them perceive refugees as victims, but when it is presented as a security one, it makes people feel uneasy and afraid of asylum seekers (Kara and Kjellgren, 2016: p.1). The Swedish sample makes both framings quite evident, which supports the notion that the discourse has shifted.
The analysis revealed that all three newspapers concentrated their news coverage on the refugee problem and uniformly referred to it as a "crisis." The issue, however, was not for individuals who were leaving their home countries; rather, it was a crisis for the country that was receiving them, namely, the internal crisis in Sweden brought on by the entrance of asylum seekers. And by continuously reporting on a crisis, Sweden was seen as being in some way in danger. The Swedish welfare system is in danger of collapsing after receiving too many immigrants, the word "collapse" or "meltdown" alluded to Swedish society (Ibid: pp.28–32). Securitization within a refugee crisis in Sweden is commonly evident in the form of discourse and policy actions designed to portray the refugee issue as a security concern. In the context of Sweden, securitization manifested itself in the areas of social order (institutional efficiency, the welfare system), the economy, and finally, in the cultural sphere. This is observed through actions like rhetoric, border control measures, and anti-immigration policies.

7. Results and Conclusion

This part will give an interpretation of the study findings and their contribution to the realm of knowledge. The research questions are designed to investigate how refugees and refugee crises were presented and framed by constructing securitization discourse in Sweden during the period from 2015 to 2017. Through an exhaustive investigation of speeches delivered by the government and media, the discursive practices used in an attempt to legitimize the securitization of migration policy have been explored. Also in this way, I observed how securitization is manifested in policy shifts and also what factors related to the refugee crisis affect securitization. So, the assessment of the research questions was approached by this paper through the employment of a qualitative content analysis and a critical discourse analysis, as well as a theoretical framework of social constructivism. The data generated through these methods was coded and analyzed in order to exemplify how Sweden securitized the 2015 refugee crisis through the use of language. Analyzing and comparing political portrayals and news coverage from before and after the peak of crises provided a way to see how security concerns were constructed in the course of the refugee crisis as well as how political speech shifts over brief periods of time. The discourse at the time of external threats so-called “refugee crisis” focused heavily on how to solve the problem, with political discussion taking up much of the media space at the time. Yet even the traditionally refugee-friendly Social Democrats changed their rhetoric to one of exclusion, suggesting that
refugees might be better off in other parts of Europe. The analysis shows that the government aspires to maintain its ideological positions in its discourse in some way. Nevertheless, as the actions they put into practice contradicted their ideologies, their discourse became confusing and repetitive.

Specifically, discourse on the securitization of migration has been shaped and policy shifted over time in Sweden. A strong focus is added on the linguistic aspect of the study as the development of the discourse is researched. The content was examined with regard to their reporting on issues related to the settlement of refugees in Sweden as well as the reporting on policies or practices of the current government at the time of the crises. More specifically, this research seeks to comprehend how the actors shaping the discourse have played a role in bringing about this change. In this manner, it has been observed that political discourse as well as national newspaper publications furthered the securitization of refugees, and the most dominant frames were used in the reporting of refugee and asylum issues. Decision-makers and mainstream media, particularly focusing on potential differences and relations as well as their influence on each, and on frame variations over time. The findings reveal that apart from the economization of the crises, established narratives of security threats together with administrative aspects of coping with the arrivals are most prominent. After 2015 and forward, less is spoken about humanitarianism frames and background knowledge on the condition of refugees. The discourse on the securitization of migration shifted from focusing on the humanitarian feature of the situation—the refugee as a person in need of assistance and protection—toward a more critical perspective, where the entrance of the refugees is primarily seen as a danger to the society that is hosting them. When an issue's salience rises significantly, media coverage becomes more extensive and eventually "crystallizes" into a narrower cluster, such as Swedish narratives narrowing over time emphasizing border security and institutional sufficiency. This narrowing of focus allows for a deeper exploration of the issue's different dimensions.

While the fact that in 2014 politicians did not view refugees as a threat to the national security or cultural identity of the host nation, the perception of refugees as victims of conflict, predominated in the discourse in 2014 and even till the end of 2015. The nation has welcomed many refugees, immigrants enjoy the same social rights as citizens, and rules on residency and citizenship have been particularly inclusive. The political discussion over immigration policy has been mostly
uncontested up until recently (the refugee crisis also served as a break in this regard), and the nation has taken pride in having an open approach towards multiculturalism and an outspoken defense against racism. However, by 2016, this perspective had become just a blip in the shadow of more critical views regarding the arrival of refugees. The ideology characterizing immigrants and refugees as risks to the social security system has subsequently been discursively implemented on immigration and asylum issues in Sweden.

The tension between generosity and restriction in Swedish migration policy has worked out differently over time due to a combination of priorities concerning the state of the national economy, employment, socio-politic culture, and welfare system in Sweden. Additionally, demands following international commitments (Geneva Convention 1954), and migration waves caused by conflicts and war within and outside Europe (Byström and Frohnert, 2017) plus regional responsibilities and European commitments. However, it is clear that the securitization of migration is not only a national threat but also a global issue since it challenges international actors’ competence to deal with integrally international and transnational questions. Therefore, by focusing on the securitization of the 2015 refugee crisis, this thesis is able to connect the event to the IR-related issue areas of global governance, international security, and transnational social mobility.

As this article attempts to claim, immigration policy in Sweden was indeed securitized, which was the factor that allowed the Swedish government not only to propose new laws and extraordinary measures but also to shift priority from immigrant rights and security to national security. As it’s expressed, securitization is the social and discursive construction of certain problems as security risks (Wæver, 2004). The securitization of the issue has been influenced by a variety of players at various levels of Swedish society. This article looked at instances of securitization in political discourse by examining press reports and speeches expressed by the government and found that while perceived refugees from a humanitarian perspective, the sudden spike in the number of asylum seekers arriving in the latter months of 2015 caused the issue to become securitized. The rhetorical shift and portrayal of the situation as a grave threat to Swedish society and public services, as well as the reinstatement of border controls and lowering of the asylum provisions to below the minimum EU standard, are obvious examples of how securitization of migration policy manifests itself.
As I mentioned earlier in the analysis, the securitization discourse somewhat distinguishes Sweden from other European countries. While cultural differences and identity anxiety predominate in other European countries, the perceived risk from the immigration wave in Sweden is the pressure exerted by the large number of refugees and asylum seekers on the welfare system and the social assistance system that is at risk of possible system failure and collapse. Institutions and societal order that will deteriorate against this heavy burden are the most important cause of the shift. The perception of immigration within a society is influenced not only by the current political and economic conditions but is also significantly shaped by the nation's self-image, historical context, traditions, political values, and cultural identity. Also, the media's influence should not be underestimated. In the Swedish case, the analysis of political discourse is frequently intertwined with media discourse in articles due to the country's democratic nature, which upholds freedom of expression. They also enable the depiction of coordinated political action e.g. ("staging" of the press conference) and provide legitimacy to the represented political initiatives.

Hence, as the analysis indicates, the media's negative coverage is centered around the 'undesirable' migrant, and discourses are shaped and influenced by the contexts in which they function as expressions of ideas. Additionally, they are societal practices that are two halves of the identical social coin. Our actions are influenced by our words, and vice versa. In this manner, this thesis will be a resource for further studies, by connecting discourse analysis with securitization and synthesizing it with the constructivist approach, emphasizing how states use discourse as a soft power element and mobilize the masses. The findings indicate that Swedish immigration policy has shifted according to internal logic, and it shows that it has been successfully securitized by the government, which has gained audience legitimacy from the Swedish Parliament. The bill contains political acts of extraordinary measures implemented by the government using security rhetoric.

In summary, the securitization of migration in Sweden is a multifaceted process, shaped by the interplay of policymakers and media discourse, as well as cultural and historical factors, along with the influence of EU policies. These elements collectively contribute to the constructed response to refugee crises in Sweden. Additionally, research on the securitization of migration enriches IMER studies by offering insights into policy impact, discourse analysis, human rights considerations, social integration, and facilitating cross-regional comparisons. This interdisciplinary approach helps better understand the complex dynamics of international
migration and its implications for ethnic relations. Applying critical discourse analysis can help to consider more critically how certain representations in policies are expressed in ways of approaching the issue. Therefore, analyzing the political discourse surrounding the period 2015-2017 in relation to the construction of asylum seekers, together with the 2015 refugee crisis and the 2016 temporary migration policy, allows us to rethink how asylum seekers are actually discussed politically, the consequences of this, and how this can be rethought.
8. Bibliography:


Åkesson, J, (2010). ”Vi vill återskapa ett folkhem” [We want to recreate a People’s Home], Nerikes Allehanda [Swedish daily], 10 October.


International Organization for Migration

DOI:10.1080/01596300050005493

https://doi.org/10.1080/08038740600600407


https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3685151


https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203011263


DOI:10.1177/1741143206062492


https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9781137275844


Dublin regulation, (2020). Country responsible for asylum application (Dublin Regulation)


The Global Approach to Migration one year on: Towards a comprehensive European migration policy


June 2018, 17:06, ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics explained/index.php/Asylum_statistics. ISSN 2443-8219


Securitization of Migration Policies in Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom


“Nation’s Political Culture?” National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) Challenges to Democracy in the 21st Century 25, University of Zurich.


Geneva Convention (1954). Relating the Status of Stateless Person


Hansen, M. (2006). To securitize or not to securitize, that is the question A study looking at the portrayal of Muslims in the Swedish Social Democratic Party’s security discourse.


Lazaridis G., Tsagkroni V. (2015). ‘Securitisation of Migration and far-right populist ‘othering’ in Scandinavian countries’ DOI:10.1057/9781137480583_10


skärps’, Svenska Dagbladet, 3 May, p. 7.


https://www.researchgate.net/publication/31492518


DOI: 10.1081/14616700500250438


https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236767071


https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512118799755


https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2046-289X https://doi.org/10.1177/1932202X18758260

http://www.migrationsinfo.se/migration/sverige/#fn-125-1


National Post View: The Syrian disaster just got even worse |


https://www.academia.edu/2749264/The_News_Media_and_Democracy


https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.1996.tb00560.x


https://livrepository.liverpool.ac.uk/3045565/1/Rossini_TargetsOfIncivility_ICAVoices_PrePrint.pdf

Rönnerstrand, P. Öhberg, & A. Bergström (2019). Storm och stiltje [Storm and lull] (pp. 421–431). Gothenburg: SOM Institute, University of Gothenburg

https://www.gu.se/som-institutet/storm-och-stiltje


Solano, P. (2020). Global and Swedish Migration

(It Must Be Possible to Discuss the Numbers), Svenska Dagbladet, 4 February, p. 5.


Staglianó, R. (2014). This is not a country for immigrants: Journalists and political discourse in Italy. In G. Dell’Orto & V. Birchfield (Eds.), Reporting at the Southern borders: Journalism and public debates on immigration in the US and the EU (pp. 191–202). New York: Routledge.

Statham https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326272166_The_European_media_discourse_on_immigration_and_its_effects_a_literature_review#:~:text=Staglian%C3%B3%2C%20R.%20(,Statham

Steinmayr A. (2016). Exposure to refugees and voting for the far-right: (Unexpected) results from Austria. Institute of Labor Economics (IZA) Discussion Paper Series No. 9790. http://hdl.handle.net/10419/141549


Svantesson, M. (2014). Threat Construction inside Bureaucracy


UNHCR (2015). The years of Europe’s refugee crises


MIPEX, website at http://www.mipex.eu/


UNHCR, (2022). Global Appeal
https://reporting.unchr.org/sites/default/files(ga2022/pdf/Global_Appeal_2022_full_lowres.pdf


Vol. 17, No. 3 (Winter, 1992-1993), pp. 91-126 (36 pages) Published By: The MIT Press


**Government Sources:**


Prop. 2013/14:197. Ändringar i utlänningslagen med anledning av den omarbetade Dublinförordningens ikraftträdande. Tillgänglig:
https://www.regeringen.se/49bb7c/contentassets/b7a9c4516c6b4860828f9e03e7f1a424/
andringar-i-utlanningslagen-med-anledning-av-den-omarbetade-
dublinforordningensikrafttradande-prop.-2013 14:197

Regeringens proposition (Prop. 2015/16:67). Särskilda åtgärder vid allvarlig fara för den allmänna ordningen eller den inre säkerheten i landet. Tillgänglig:
https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/23c37b142cd54d658d660dc5ca27afe5/sarskild
a-atgarder-vid-allvarlig-fara-for-den-allmanna-ordningen-eller-den-inre-sakerheten-ilandet-
prop.-2015 16:67


the-possibility-of-being-granted-a-residence-permit-in-sweden/ 20, 2018

Migrationsverket (2015). Statistics for 2015, Swedish Migration Agency. Available at:
http://www.migrationsverket.se/English/About-the-Migration-Agency/Facts-and-statistics-
/Statistics/2015.html

Nearly 163,000 people sought asylum in Sweden in 2015.}

Migrationsverket (2017). Protection status. Available at: https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Protection-and-asylum-in-Sweden/When-you-have-received-a-decision-on-your-asylum-application/If-you-are-allowed-to-stay/Protection-status.html

Migrationsverket (2017). Family reunification. Swedish Migration Agency. Available at: https://www.migrationsverket.se/English/Private-individuals/Protection-and-asylum-in-Sweden/When-you-have-received-a-decision-on-your-asylum-application/If-you-are-allowed-to-stay/Family-reunification.html


SFS 2015:1073. Om särskilda åtgärder vid allvarlig fara för den allmänna ordningen eller


**Empirical material:**

Aftonbladet (2015-04-21). Petterson K. Give a suitable answer to the following query: “Shall we let the people drown or rescue their lives? Ge rätt svar på frågan: Ska vi rädda människors liv eller låta dem drunka?

Aftonbladet (2015-11-12). in Kara and Kjellgren, 2016:33 ”Strömmen av flyktingar som ska sova sin förstanatt i Sverige tycks aldrig sina”


Aftonbladet (2016-03-19). Lindberg A. Europé building new iron curtain. Europa bygger en ny järnridå

Aftonbladet (2016-03-19). Lindberg A. Skepsis mot EU:s avtal med Turkiet


Svenska Dagbladet (2015-08-01). Vilket Sverige kommer vi ha om 45 år? What Sweden will we have 45 years from now?
Svenska Dagbladet (2015-11-14). Brandel, T., Eriksson, G. “Från öppna hjärtan till gränskontroller” From open your hears to border control

Dagens Nyheter (2015-09-06). Bolling, A. ”Löfven: Min Europa bygger inte murar. My Europe doe not build wall”.

Dagens Nyheter (2015-11-25). create breathing space in the Swedish refugee reception“skapa andrum i svensk flyktingmottagningen”

Dagens Nyheter (2015-10-30). Swedish municipality is struggling to meet its financial obligations; as a result, 200 children are unable to attend school owing to a lack of facilities; social services are at breaking point; and eventually, the entire system will crumble eventually. svensk kommun kämpar för att uppfylla sina ekonomiska åtaganden; till följd av detta kan 200 barn inte gå i skolan på grund av brist på lokaler; sociala tjänster är på bristningsgränsen; och till slut kommer hela systemet att falla sönder så småningom.

Dagens Nyheter (2015c). Right now, we don't even have enough tents for everyone, and finding shelter is at least difficult Just nu har vi inte ens tillräckligt med tält för alla, och det är minst sagt svårt att hitta skydd Dagens Nyheter, p. 4.

Dagens Nyheter (2015d). the Migration Agency and the municipalities are overburdened Migrationsverket och kommunerna är överbelastade Dagens Nyheter, p. 4.

Dagens Nyheter, (2016-03-24). Neveus I. whole will be affected whether we want or not. Hela Europa kommer att påverkas – vare sig vi vill eller inte

Dagens Nyheter (2016-03-21). No stop for refugee boats. ”Inget stopp för flyktingbåtar”

Dagens Nyheter, (2017-12-21). ”Finansministern i stor intervju: 'Flyktingar kan få det bättre i andra länder”May be better if refugee go in other countries.

Svenska Dagbladet, (2017-5-5, p.7) Rogberg, S. Cameras wil tightened border control. ‘Kameror ska skärpa den svenska gränskontrollen’


http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=83&artikel=6310099
https://twitter.com/margotwallstrom